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**GIVE YOURSELF
BACKGROUND**

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BIOGRAPHY

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EDUCATIONAL

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You Can Write Leisure League

FICTION

The Woolly Lamb of God Revell

DRAMA

The Woolly Lamb of God French

GIVE YOURSELF BACKGROUND

By

F. FRASER BOND

Education of whatever kind has for its proximate end to prepare the student for the business of life.

Throughout youth, as in early childhood and maturity, the process of education should be one of self-instruction.

—HERBERT SPENCER

New York WHITTLESEY HOUSE *London*
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PREFACE

The educated person, they say, is one who knows something about everything and everything about something. This means that he has at least a nodding acquaintance with many subjects, and has made himself a specialist in one line. I use the phrase *made himself* advisedly, for the process of becoming educated does not consist in being spoon fed. It consists of a personal effort deliberately made to avail oneself of one's opportunities. In these days information surrounds everyone. It is almost as omnipresent as the ambient air and in most cases just as free. All its enjoyments, all its advantages are yours for the taking.

People who lament their lack of education should expect no sympathy. In these days they can easily remedy that defect and take their places in cultivated society. Too often they base their lament on the fact that they did not have the chance to attend college. College attendance in itself does not imply education. I have taught in a university for years and I would like to think that many of the young men and women who sat in rows before me in a polite coma were being educated. In some cases they were; in others the process would not begin

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until years later when they individually awoke to the fact that they needed information and understanding and set themselves to the work of making the wanted knowledge their own.

Life consists in taking in and giving out. William James says that in the highest form of life, Man, the process consists in taking in, turning over, and giving out—the turning over being the period of mental appreciation. To give out, one must take in; one must have a filled up reservoir on which to draw; one must have a background.

This book deals with the acquisition of a background. It shows how you can use your public library, your newspaper, your radio as college instructors. It indicates how you can read and listen not merely to pass the time but for your own ultimate advantage. It uses short cuts where short cuts are available and have been found of value. It suggests methods of study, based on current psychology, which you can apply to the whole wide realm of knowledge and make yours as much of it as you need.

This book also shows you the ways and means of turning to your own advantage this background when acquired. It indicates how you can make use of background in your business, your social contacts, your community and club life. It shows how through the development of background you make your days more interesting, your personality

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richer, and your contribution to life more worth while.

Tennyson makes Ulysses say: "I am a part of all that I have met." Seek the best minds, read the best books. Make all that they have to offer a part of you.

F. FRASER BOND.

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Give Yourself Background

CHAPTER I

WHY BACKGROUND?

Why background is important: to the individual himself; to the individual in relation to society. How background can be acquired. When to begin background building.

Time and time again we have all heard such expressions as, "Unfortunately he has no 'background,' " or "She is intelligent, of course, but totally lacking in 'background.' " And we have been aware that, because of failure to possess this attribute, doors were being shut against the individuals thus weighed in the balance and found wanting.

On the other hand we have heard such remarks as, "It is always a pleasure to meet him. He is so interesting," or "She is quite the right one for the position; she has such a fine 'background.' " And we have seen the doors of society and business swing open in wide welcome to lucky persons who possessed this open-sesame.

What is background? What is this all-important part of personality? Is it something that one can acquire for oneself? We can define background as

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personal cultivation. We can cultivate background as we can cultivate a flower in the garden, with much the same care and much the same success. If we leave the plant to itself, it grows wild and in time becomes a weed. If we take the trouble to dig around it to supply nourishment to its roots, to prune it, to direct its growth, it repays our care by becoming a cultivated flower, a thing of beauty and distinction, and perhaps a prize-winning bloom. If we carry over this simple comparison and apply it to the human mind and personality, we see that cultivation still demands care; it means the supplying of the right nourishment, the sloughing off of the worthless, and the concentrating on the worth while.

Why Background Is Important

Background has a twofold importance. It is necessary to the individual himself in his adventure of living; it is necessary to the individual in relation to society if he is to get the most benefit from his contacts with his fellow men.

Background benefits the individual because it enables him to live his life more enjoyably, more successfully, and with ever-increasing resources in himself and interest in his surroundings. With background one can lead the fuller life. The badly adjusted radio set can pick up little from the ether around it. The superb instrument with the com-

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plete range of improvements, the latest tubes, and the newest coils and aërials and ground wires in perfect adjustment can pick up everything that comes over the air from near at hand and from the remotest corner of the earth. The person without background resembles the inferior receiving set. He cannot take advantage of the best that life has to offer because he cannot tune in on it. The man with background, like the superior set, has facilities that enable him to get the best out of life. The newer and the finer the tubes and the more exact the adjustments, the better the music that filters through. One's capacity for enjoyment of all that life offers is enhanced in direct proportion to the sum of one's understood and appreciated experiences.

Background benefits the individual because it develops his powers of judgment and gives him sound standards of taste. Judgment and taste constitute one's critical faculties and enable one to select and to appraise. These faculties have great value in all relationships. They increase immeasurably the enjoyment of the arts. Take the case of music. If we have no particular ear for music and happen to tune in on the radio while a Bach fugue is being played, we get from it sound and little more. If we want to get more, if we want to add a knowledge of Bach to our cultural background, we listen and listen and listen. We pay attention to what the announcer tells us of who Bach was, and

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what he did and how he did it, and what we should look for in his music. If we listen to Bach music again in the light of this information, we find that it is no longer mere sound to us, but that it now holds an interest. As this interest grows and our knowledge of his music increases because we make a point of tuning in on those programs or attending those concerts where Bach is played, that interest and that widening knowledge ripen to understanding. Eventually we come to the point where we ourselves, without benefit of announcer or music critic, can make certain comparisons between Bach and Irving Berlin. We place each man in his own field within the same art, and know where those fields converge and where they diverge.

The same rules, the same procedure, and the same result hold good in literature. As we develop background in the use of the mother tongue and grow in our appreciation of words, language, and the literary graces, we become able to make at least rudimentary distinctions between the work of the stylists and that of the riff-raff writers; we learn to form personal subjective opinions. This, after all, is what is meant by forming taste. We are putting new coils and tubes and aerials in our private receiving sets.

Background benefits its possessor in all his contacts both with society and in business. The superior radio set not only receives well, but it transmits

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well. If we have background, we can express ourselves more completely, more efficiently, more valuably. Something of our own personal cultivation goes out from us to the people we meet. They find our conversation and our ideas colorful. Just as a prism takes on color from its many facets, so our personality gains through the many sides which the development of fresh interests has given us. Our associates begin to refer to us as persons of judgment and good taste. We indicate to them our possession of these attributes in:

Our clothes

Our manner and manners

Our expressions of thought in conversation and in our letters

As a result we come to take on a new importance in our community life, in our social activities, and in our business or professional contacts. We have begun to count.

The possession of background benefits us not only through enhancing us in the eyes of the world, but through enabling us to gain a more thorough understanding of all whom we meet. An intelligent reading of fiction in book form or in the magazines will introduce us to many human types and many human idiosyncrasies. We gain an understanding of the social forces that develop such types and a knowledge of how best to cope with them when encountered in actual life.

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An intelligent viewing of many screen plays will aid in the same way. For literary purposes, authors often exaggerate the human traits they present in order to emphasize some special point. We can benefit by this exaggeration for it fixes the trait more vividly in our memories, and we can make allowances for this dramatic device when we discover the same traits in our everyday contacts.

There are few human characteristics and relationships that fiction in story or play form does not utilize. It analyzes them, shows their capacities for good and ill, and often offers methods to solve the problems they create. An adequate background in fiction alone will give its possessor the ability to understand and handle people, a deeper sympathy for the weaknesses of mankind, and a greater appreciation of the heights to which the human character can rise.

Background Can Be Acquired

Can background be acquired? Yes. There are four main ways. Background can be secured through the experiences of life, slowly. Background can be secured through the curricula of formal education in grammar school, preparatory school, and university. Background can be secured, and secured effectively, by self-education. Background can be secured through association.

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The first way is long and rough. It is the course of trial and error. It takes few short cuts for it is a path lighted by individual experience rather than by the pooled experience of the race. Only the hardest achieve success.

The second way, that of formal education, is still the conventional way, but many people who have both the desire and the capacity for culture cannot enjoy the advantages of a university education.

The third way, that of self-instruction, is now more efficiently mapped and more expertly lighted than ever before in the history of the race. Science, through the press, the motion picture, and the radio, has made cultural opportunity more widely available. Scholarship in compiling "outline" books, which deal with every field of learning, gives us authentic short cuts to the fundamentals of a liberal education. Of course, we must regard such books, as their authors intend us to regard them, primarily as introducers to their separate subjects. It is for us to pursue the acquaintance.

The fourth way, that of association, is a route that travelers on all the other roads make use of, either consciously or unconsciously. It is the subtle path by which we come to possess good taste and good form.

Culture, as Henry James Forman has pointed out, is one of those elusive attributes in the indi-

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vidual, as difficult to define as what makes a gentleman. Indeed sensitive people shy away from both of these words and their definitions. Unfortunately, we lack substitutes for either. Both words carry with them in the popular mind an air of self-conscious superiority, alien to their true nature. They carry this through no fault of their own and find themselves frequently applied to the patently pseudo and spurious.

Because culture is the result of an individual process and as such is the antithesis of all that smacks of mass production, it can never subscribe to any blanket dogma. Cardinal Newman has written that "there is a beauty of person, there is a beauty of our moral being, which is natural virtue; and in like manner there is a beauty, there is a perfection of the intellect." Cultivated taste perceives these beauties through its feeling and understanding. Bit by bit, fragment by fragment, it builds up a blend of emotional and mental appreciation.

Can one develop good taste? Most certainly. One acquires it by developing sound standards. We gain these by deliberate association with the best. We gain them less deliberately through all worthwhile associations. Although eminent educationalists have decried the notion that culture is a sort of contagion, which one "gets" by being exposed to it, the notion holds a real truth.

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Association with good music aids us both to understand and to appreciate good music. Contact with persons of breeding improves both our own actual conduct and our understanding of what underlies correct behavior. Familiarity with the best books breeds contempt for the trashy and vulgar in writing. Our own individual taste grows in assurance through association with those standards that the cultivated world has itself developed.

Where do we find these standards? Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler answers us, when he says:

They are all about us in the masterpieces of literature, in the great achievements of art and architecture, and in the noble deeds and words of splendid men and women. We find our standards in our associations. If we seek contact with what is best in letters, in art, in conduct, we insensibly become familiar with what is best and what is base and what is ugly.

By adhering to the right standards, the French people, as Dr. Butler also points out, have developed good taste as a national trait.

One of the great achievements of the people of modern France is to have brought this characteristic of an educated people more largely into the life of a nation as a whole than any other people has thus far been able to do; and as a consequence, French taste, French standards of criticism and appreciation are recognized all over the world because the people of France, educated and less educated, rich and poor, dwellers in the city and peasants living in the fields have all come more or less into contact with these fine

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standards which are giving so much comfort and satisfaction and distinction to their national life.

When we turn from the aesthetic side of good taste to the practical side of personal relationships, we leave France and go across the channel for our model. The English have developed "good form" into a national fetish. The basic pattern here is not intellectual but an instinctive feeling for the right thing. Fundamentally, good manners in personal relationships go back to the underlying rules of good sportsmanship. The English try to "play the game" in general society as true to form as they play it on the football field or the cricket pitch. The unfairly aggressive attitude, the ill-bred slighting or underestimating of one's rival, anything that savors of taking an unwarranted advantage is as they say "not cricket." The sporting thing to do turns out to be the gentlemanly thing to do.

When to Begin Background Building

When should one begin background building? Is there an age limit to self-improvement? The first question indicates the consciousness of the lack of background, and the second the desire to remedy that lack. When both this consciousness and this desire coincide, the time to start the process has come.

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Many examples from the lives of famous men who succeeded because they developed background through their own initiative tend to bear out this conclusion. They did not start their background building until they felt both their lack of a rounded education and the strong desire to secure this all-important asset through their own intelligent effort.

This was so in the case of the Earl of Rosebery, who was regarded at the time of his death as one of the most genuinely cultivated men in England. True, he attended Eton and Oxford, but according to E. T. Raymond, his biographer, he took little away from them.

He was in a very real sense a self-educated man. What he learned was picked up in his library. The circumstances were more splendid, the means of self-education were more commodious, but Lord Rosebery's case was essentially not unlike that of the intelligent working man who instructs himself by the light of a gas-jet in a freezing bed-room. A fine library, an excellent memory, a capacious understanding, a naturally good literary taste and knack, an earnest ambition to qualify for political life, did much to supply the deficiencies of his formal education.

Is there an age limit to background building?

Neither age nor the lack of it can set a limit on achievement if the will and desire to learn are present; neither age nor the lack of it need hinder our power of absorbing and making use of new ideas and new information. Education is a process that

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never stops. The world's leaders never get over the habit of study. At the age of sixty-eight, the late Charles Ransom Miller, editor of *The New York Times*, embarked on the study of Russian. At this time the great war in Europe kept the always-busy editor busier than ever. Accordingly he devised means by which he could utilize his few unfilled moments. He had large cards prepared on which were written the letters of the Russian alphabet. These he would place at the foot of his bed at night where they would be the first objects he saw in the morning. Before he rose he would get in some intensive study. Then he would take the cards into his bathroom and attach them around his shaving mirror. In this way, constantly keeping at it, he came eventually to read Russian with facility, and even to converse in it. Similarly, to all men who amount to anything, education is available; one can acquire it at sixty as well as at sixteen.

If you feel that new information and new ideas, together with the stimulation they supply, will enable you to look on the world with a fresh point of view, will enrich your personality with wider capacities to understand and enjoy life and greater ability to take advantage of the opportunities it offers—the time to start your background building is now.

CHAPTER II

EVERY MAN HIS OWN BEST TEACHER

What is self-education? The media of self-education: the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, books, the motion picture, the theater, etc. Necessary mental qualities. Rules for effective study. The techniques of memorizing and remembering. Six tests of the educated man.

Every man is his own best teacher. He alone knows the information he most needs; he alone can best shape it to his own ends. The adult man or woman can grasp in a moment what it may take a child hours or even days to comprehend. The compulsion of the hickory stick no longer counts. In its place exists the urge to know and to understand.

What Is Self-education?

What do we mean by self-education? Professor Robert S. Woodworth, Professor of Psychology in Columbia University, gives us an answer when he defines learning as "the development of the individual through his own ability."

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The reason for the development of the individual is the reason behind all education, namely, to enable that individual so to make use of all his resources that he may the more successfully cope with the problems of life.

This was the basic idea of that famous school-master, Sanderson of Oundle, of whom it has been said: "He did not want to deck-load a boy with knowledge, but rather fit him out as 'well-found' and seaworthy for the voyage of life." It remains the idea of that modern seer of education, John Dewey, who believes that the preparation of the individual for life means "to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities; that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command; that his judgment may be capable of grasping the conditions under which it has to work, and the executive forces be trained to act economically and efficiently."

The methods of education may differ. The fundamental process remains the same: one learns for one's self. One develops one's self through one's own efforts. Whether this self-instruction takes place at Oxford or Cambridge or Harvard or Yale, or in a hall bedroom or in a woodsman's shack, it follows the one procedure: a mind takes in, turns over, and gives out or stores away for future use.

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The Media of Self-education

The modern world supplies the modern individual with many readily available agencies which he can use to develop himself through his own efforts. Outstanding among these agencies are:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Books
- Radio
- The motion picture
- The theater
- Concerts
- Lectures
- Personal contacts

The first six of these media of self-education are so important as suppliers of background-building material that we deal with them separately in special chapters. We indicate here how best to make use of the last three listed: concerts, lectures, and personal contacts.

The concert introduces us at once to the cultural side of background building by bringing to us the most universal of all the arts, the art of music. While most people, as they say, "love" music, some more than others are specially endowed by nature to appreciate it. Everyday speech calls such people "born musicians." Other individuals of

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equal or even greater intelligence may be "tone deaf" or "have no ear for music." All, however, can gain through concert attendance an idea of music's range and importance, its influence, something of its history and of the lives and work of the great musicians. Both the emotions and the intellect fuse in music appreciation; music can be both felt and understood. From concert attendance one gains:

Familiarity with music

A knowledge of music forms

Experience and standards by which to judge musical composition and musical interpretation

For centuries the lecture has been a popular method of instruction. Until the advent of printing, it stood out as the chief way in which thought could be transmitted to mankind in groups. Today the printed page has taken the place of the lecture as the leading distributor of knowledge. Despite this loss of preeminence, the lecture still remains a vital force in education, for the printed page with all its virtues lacks the power of the human voice and the interest that attaches to human personality.

While the subject range of lectures is all-inclusive the most popular field deals with the cultural aspects of life. Accordingly, you will find the lecture a valuable aid in background building.

Most lectures have as their purpose the desire to inform and to explain. The technique of exposit-

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tion rests on a framework or plan, the divisions and subdivisions of which follow each other in logical order. Exposition as a process of explaining makes use of the following chief devices:

Illustration—an example

Comparison—to show likeness or dissimilarity to something with which the hearer is familiar

Contrast—marked differences shown by juxtaposition

Analogy—the indication of similarity between different things: sleep and death

The planned lecture announces each division and subdivision in a single declarative sentence.

Accordingly, if we use this knowledge of the lecture's basic outline as our guide, we can take notes that will be logical rather than disorganized, planned rather than haphazard. The most efficient way to take notes on a lecture is to:

Write down each topic sentence of each division.

Under it, make note of the particular fact or illustration you wish to remember.

Take full notes of the lecturer's conclusions or his summary.

This is usually the last division of his address.

You then have the complete outline in skeleton form. Under each division of this outline you have pertinent illustrations or comparisons or statistics. You will find that reference to this logical arrangement of the subject will bring back to your mind

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much of the lecturer's material whether you made note of it or not. By limiting note taking to the essentials, you leave your mind free to follow the lecturer's reasoning and to understand his purpose.

The personal contacts that everyday life provides form another valuable agency in self-education. Each individual, however humble or however exalted, has some special skill or ability, some unique experience or knowledge that he can communicate. People talk most fluently and most easily on the subjects they understand. If we are wise, we use conversation as a means of enlarging our background. The ideal conversation is a game of give and take. If we take from it, we must also give to it. The actual process of setting forth in words what we know and understand has practical value for us in crystallizing the information we have and in adding to our personal facility and felicity of expression. If we have the opportunity to associate with a person of a more mature mind and a richer experience than our own, such a contact may prove of very definite value.

Dr. Claude M. Feuss, headmaster of Phillips Andover Academy, holds this idea of education through association in high regard. Writing in *The Atlantic Monthly*, he says:

The ideal education is that which an immature mind absorbs almost unconsciously from close contact with a more mature one—such relationship as existed between

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Alexander Hamilton and George Washington, between John Hay and Abraham Lincoln, between Henry Cabot Lodge and Henry Adams. In Hamilton, Hay and Lodge some fire was kindled by association with a glowing intellect, and the flame was one which the world will not willingly let die.

Necessary Mental Qualities

In order to make the best use of these many available media for self-instruction, we must possess or develop certain qualities of the mind. The four outstanding prerequisites are:

Curiosity—the urge to question

Alertness—the state of being mentally “on one’s toes”

Observation—the use of the eye, not merely to gaze but to *see*

Ability to associate ideas—to see relationship, to note cause and effect

Every normal person has these attributes in greater or less degree. Although qualities of the mind, they can be hampered by physical defects. A sluggish bodily condition might well interfere with one’s alertness. Defective eyesight mechanically hinders the field of observation. Correct as far as possible such physical detriments. Tune up the system. Secure the best lenses procurable. Give the essential qualities of curiosity, alertness, and observation the very best chance to function efficiently.

But in this whole scheme of background building we put the main emphasis on the mind and its

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training. The old adage of a sound mind in a sound body as the ideal still holds good. A person with normal health, normal eyesight, normal hearing finds the process of education easier than one who has physical handicaps to overcome. But in the last analysis it is the mental rather than the physical development that wins out. We see how true this is in the lives of such individuals as Robert Louis Stevenson, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Helen Keller.

Apart from the mind, the chemical components of the human body would sell for one dollar. That price holds good whether the body belongs to a driveling idiot or to an Einstein. According to Dr. F. E. Lawson, an English savant, the average man weighing 140 pounds is composed of enough water to fill a ten-gallon barrel, enough fat for seven cakes of soap, enough carbon for 9,000 lead pencils, enough phosphorous to make 2,200 match heads, sufficient magnesium for one dose of salts, enough iron to make one medium-sized nail, sufficient lime to whitewash a chicken coop, and enough sulphur to rid one dog of fleas. But the human mind with its possibilities baffles all attempts at evaluation.

Generally speaking, we can think of minds as being of two types: the memorizing type, which seems created to file and classify; and the thinking mind which observes, develops, progresses.

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The modern world gives its greatest rewards to the second type of mind. We no longer ask of a person, "How much does he know?" Instead, we ask of him, "What use can he make of his knowledge?"

How to Study Effectively

The chief advantages of university training lie in the idea of planned and organized study, in learning how best to draw from the reservoirs of knowledge and how to shape to one's own ends the knowledge thus acquired. We can all take over these benefits from the campus and utilize them in our own homes.

The science of psychology takes for its province the human mind and its workings. Its intensive researches have brought to light the most efficient ways to learn and to retain in the memory that portion of knowledge which we wish to make our own.

The following simple rules are based on these psychological findings. They cut the time spent in study by eliminating the time wasted, and bring to the student who adopts them the satisfaction of knowing that he is following formulas whose efficiency has been tested and proved.

Relax

The first rule is to relax. Relaxation is a basic prerequisite to all learning or memory processes. If

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the mind is in a disturbed state, harassed by worry, emotionally upset, panicky for fear that the work cannot be done on time, etc., it defeats itself. It cannot concentrate. Relax. Approach all mental work coolly, calmly, and unhurriedly.

PREPARATIONS FOR STUDY

1. Set a definite time for study.
2. Set a definite place in which to work.
3. Prepare the surroundings by securing the best possible light and a comfortable chair.
4. Prepare the mechanical equipment. Place the books you will need on your table; sharpen your pencils, etc.
5. Remove as far as possible all distracting influences from the room. If you intend to read, turn off the radio.

THE PROCEDURE OF STUDY

1. Start promptly at the hour you have set.
2. Make a preliminary survey of the range you wish to cover in the time.
3. Define your goal.
4. Eliminate unessentials by checking material in the table of contents and in the index.
5. Vary your activity. When your reading interest flags, write down an outline of material just covered.

THE TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

1. Associate in your mind the ideas you receive as they come to you in reading in relation to one another.
2. Make sure that you understand the words used in order that the ideas you form may be the ideas the writer intends you to form.

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3. Repeat these ideas to yourself:
 - (a) In the author's words;
 - (b) In your own words.
4. Discover some personal reward or benefit that the information being learned will bestow. Discover some personal punishment or loss that may come through failure to learn the subject matter in hand. The idea of reward or punishment is a basic stimulus in the learning technique. Use it deliberately.
5. Form the material being studied into a pattern. At first this pattern is a mere framework or outline. Amplify this by fitting all related parts into the general scheme.

TECHNIQUE OF MEMORIZING

1. Discover and organize the significant facts in the material to be memorized. As Professor R. S. Woodworth points out, this method has been found much more efficient than dull repetition. It saves time.
2. Recite to yourself what you are memorizing. After reading over the material once or twice, attempt to recite it, and prompt yourself from the text when you cannot continue. This practice of reciting to one's self saves time and fixes the material more enduringly in the mind.
3. Space your reading of the material. Leave some time between readings to think over the material read.
4. Space your repetitions of the material. Repetition of the material fixes it better in the memory when an interval elapses between the repetitions.
5. Memorize your material as a unity rather than in parts. Experiment has shown that this method saves time. It impresses on the mind the meaning, the outline, and the broad relationships of the material. Memorizing is a deliberate act of intentional learning. As such it can be managed scientifically with a view to economizing the

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time spent on the act and utilizing one's concentration to the best result. Memorizing places the material learned in the mind. How can we avoid forgetting it?

HOW TO AVOID FORGETTING

1. After memorizing something important which you wish to retain in your mind, go to sleep, rest, relax, or "take it easy." Just as in muscle building, one rests between exercises, so one is advised to rest after mental exercise.
2. Review the memorized material. Well-learned material can be kept in the mind by reviews spaced at long intervals.

Tests of an Educated Man

So much for the processes of learning. What of the product? What is an educated man? Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University gives an authoritative answer. He has listed six tests which, reduced to simple outline, are as follows:

1. Correctness in the use of the mother tongue
2. Refined and gentle manners which are the expression of fixed habits of thought
3. Sound standards of taste
4. The power and habit of reflection
5. Constant intellectual growth
6. The power to translate thought into efficiency

This brief and suggestive list not only gives us some criteria by which we can tell the educated from the uneducated, but provides us with tests that we can apply to ourselves in order to ascertain whether we are advancing. Let us use them as a

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guide throughout our whole process of background building, a process which may well have as its ultimate goal the achievement that the last of the tests sets forth: "the power to translate thought into efficiency."

Let us take up briefly in turn each of these tests:

Correct Language. Language is the expression of thought and therefore of life. It is not merely an artificial set of signs and sounds for conveying ideas. A man's words project a picture of his mind. If his mind is topsy-turvy, his words show it. They are involved and confused. If his mind is orderly, so is his speech. We mark our progress in education as we increase in correctness and precision in the use of the mother tongue. How can we individually gain this correctness and precision? Dr. Butler answers this question for us. "The way to learn good English is to associate with good English. If we read good English and hear good English, we begin to write good English and to speak good English. Correctness and precision in the use of the mother tongue are to be gained chiefly through association in reading and in speech with good English."

Good Manners. This test, of course, does not refer to parlor tricks or the outward polish that is so often merely a veneer. It implies correct social behavior but it goes deeper. "To be a gentleman is within the reach of everyone of us who understands

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the real meaning of that term. It is to have an attitude toward others which is based on self-respect and regard for human personality."

Courtesy also implies a constant thought for other people's rights and feelings. How can we attain gentle manners? By never willingly causing pain to others. Dean Swift once remarked that the best bred man in any company was the one who made the fewest people uncomfortable.

Good Taste. One might put forward a reasonable claim that good taste, which implies sound standards of feeling and appreciation, ranks as the supreme test of the educated man. Your ultimate claim to that distinction rests upon the sort of things you like. Again to quote Dr. Butler: "To know what is good, what is beautiful, what is interesting, what is helpful, and to distinguish these from what is bad, what is ugly, what is uninteresting and what is degrading, is another sure sign that we are advancing in competence and making progress in education." Good taste implies a development of discernment. One is not really cultivated until his ideas and beliefs have soaked down into his likes and dislikes. How can we achieve this end? The way to get to like the best things is to get acquainted with them.

Reflection. Reflection, which is both a power and a habit, marks the educated from the uneducated mind. It is a process of turning things over

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in the mind. The ignorant mind jumps to conclusions; the educated mind takes the new idea and ponders it. The educated mind considers the new thing in the light of established ideas and discovers how it is going to get along with them. The educated mind takes apart, examines, tests, and develops critical ability.

“When you reflect, you ask a question—How? The answer is all science. And when you reflect, you ask the question—Why? The answer is all philosophy.” How can one gain the power and habit of reflection? One can gain this power and acquire this habit by refusing to let oneself be stampeded, by stopping to test and to examine.

Growth. Physical growth stops long before the arteries harden. Mental growth stops and the mental arteries harden the minute we fail to look upon life and the world with an open mind. The educated man knows that the need and the desire to learn never let up. He looks eagerly for new facts, new ideas. His mind grows. For the vast majority the power for mental growth passes early because with the majority the desire for growth passes early. The psychologist points out: “No man over forty changes the style of his collar.” How can we work for mental growth? We can work for mental growth by forming the habit of open-mindedness, by keeping informed, by sympathizing with new aspirations.

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The Power to Translate Thought into Concise Action. This is the power to do, to achieve, to mold, to use the machinery of life efficiently. The difference between the ignorant and the educated thinker does not lie in the amount of time each spends in thought but in the type of thought. The former's thoughts go round and round like the squirrel in his cage and lead him nowhere; the trained thinker uses thought as a guide to appropriate action. To the educated man the ideal flows easily into the practical. He makes the word flesh. He learns by doing; his thinking takes form in deed. How can one translate thought into efficient action? The chapters that follow will try to answer this question.

CHAPTER III

CORRECT SPEECH: THE FIRST ESSENTIAL

Why correct speech is important. The "tune" of speech. Tests for pronunciation. Setting a standard. Ways to achieve correct speech. Beauty in speech. Defects in contemporary speech.

Knowing how to speak correctly opens the first door to success in business and in social life. It is the first test of the educated man or woman. Without this ability, we feel hampered, diffident, and uncouth. Our manner betrays this sense of inferiority. The world, which takes us at our face value, sees our uncertainty and draws its own conclusions. No one can afford to let himself be marked down.

Lacking correct speech, we may well feel hampered, for speech forms the main outlet for thought. It, and not merely the knack of walking on our hind legs, differentiates us from the lower animals. A dog, through bark or growl or tail wagging, can tell us only what he feels; he has no way of giving us the reasons.

Everyone who has no physical impediment to speech can learn to speak his mother tongue cor-

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rectly. Even those orally handicapped can by effort largely overcome their misfortune. The secret to success is conscious effort. Those of us who speak incorrectly do so because we are too lazy to speak otherwise. Many of us deny ourselves the use of words whose meaning we know well, simply because we are too indolent and too indifferent to find the correct way to pronounce them. Youngsters who read widely know the meaning of scores of words when they see them in print. Yet they never bother to pronounce them to themselves, and are content to accept them as written symbols. Many of us carry over this compromise into adult life.

The present age, with radio and the talking picture, places more emphasis than ever on the spoken word. Unfortunately, these agencies do not always bring us the correctly spoken word, though they improve yearly in that regard. Their value to us lies in the fact that they do speak and that we are thus enabled to hear. If we make the right use of them as mentors, we have available tutors in pronunciation of which our forefathers never dreamed. To learn correct pronunciation, we must consciously associate with correct pronunciation. As we listen to speeches by men and women of accepted cultivation in a hall or over the radio, we should make deliberate note of the way they pronounce certain words, if their way happens to differ from ours.

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The "Tune" of Speech

Before words appeared as written symbols, they already existed as sounds. As individuals we all follow this trail of primitive man; as children, we speak before we can print or write. Even before we learn to speak, we can make articulate sounds to express our feelings. We convey our meaning chiefly through the tune we use. This tune of speech remains important.

When we are learning to talk as babies in our own language, or as adults in a foreign tongue, we have to work our way, syllable by syllable. But when we have a mastery of speech we express ourselves and understand others largely through the tune, the accent, the rising and falling of the voice. When we call out a question to someone in another room, we can often tell the answer if we hear the tune of it; the words do not matter.

Suppose, for instance, we call out: "I have two tickets for the theater tonight; will you come with me?" We hear two undistinguishable syllables in delighted tones. We get our answer, though we could not swear that the syllables were: "Ra-ther!" "De-lighted!" or "S-well." This tune cannot be written down; it occurs only with the spoken word. We must keep it in mind in our efforts to develop correct speech.

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It is in tune, in accent, rather than in basic vocabulary or idiom that American and English speech differ. Both branches of the English-speaking peoples have English as their mother tongue. Writers who dilate on the American language and cite long lists of expressions and words which some Americans use but which no Englishman uses, unless he is quoting from the cinema, write beside the point. They overlook the far longer list of words and phrases which all English-speaking peoples hold in common.

Tests for Pronunciation

The important thing for the average man anywhere is to speak as well as he can the best language he and his hearers know. But the difficult thing is for the average man to realize that the pronunciation he has used all his life is not on that account the only one. It does not follow that those who use a different one are people of inferior education. How correctly do we pronounce our mother tongue? Here we have a story devised to test us. It will be both amusing and instructive before we proceed further to gauge our batting average. Read this story aloud. Then consult the tabulation which lists the story's vocabulary and places after each word its pronunciation according to established American usage.

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A CURIOUS COUPLE

By C. H. R.

Under the azure crouched an indisputable Indian. His forehead was bedizened with herbage, and he wore a scarlet belt about his abdomen. Though his conduct was exemplary and decorous, he lived in extraordinary squalor.

Though, like a patriot, familiar with the tribal legends his parents had taught him, he knew little beyond legendary lore, and was ignorant of our national literature, and of the process of telegraphy.

He knew nothing of calligraphy, and very little about finance. He was not an aspirant for Parliament, but he hoped to exorcise evil spirits from the epoch by the advertisement of an Indian sacrifice. When granted a favor, he sought the apotheosis of his patron.

A piquant matron by his side was his housewife to whom he gave alternately a meager maintenance and peremptory commands, for he considered the position irrefragable, that to perfect a woman she must be isolated and made to obey. On this point he considered his arguments irrefutable. He appeared to care little for hymeneal harmony. Her peculiarity was bronchitis, which he hoped to cure by launching a tiny raspberry into the interstices of her larynx. The two made a squalid but interesting tableau.

The dramatis personae of this scenario was named Elihu (alias Rain-in-the-Face) and Minnehaha, his wife. While she was no pianist, she was a dutiful wife. He was glad to have her as his coadjutor. Yet in her lonely life he would often harass her with some sardonic inquiry or with a virulent threat to put her in gaol. She would then placate him by cooking for him some flaccid sweet potatoes fried

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in oleomargarine, hoping he would not longer treat her as a pariah.

This antique girl sat often by the road, eating Italian almonds, and musing over esoteric vagaries. Her temper was as changeable as the hues of a chameleon. An attitude of languor indicated a need of condolence, or of allopathy, and her hair, worn in pyramidal style made her the cynosure of the tribe. Her tatterdemalion husband would lounge through the livelong day, and at nightfall begin an address to her, with the grimaces and gibberish of a ruffian. Thus:

"Ugh! Wake to your duty, and be a docile and notable squaw. Bring my gondola, and let us relieve some granary of its produce."

To which she, with grim raillery, replied: "You blatant blackguard, I won't. Your truculent commands are not obligatory on me. It would exhaust my strength and enervate my constitution; neither have I dropped to such a degree of decadence as to be a Communist."

Then he coaxed: "Do, dear, and I'll give you a bouquet and a brooch of diamonds. You shall find it a jocund and not a dolorous task. You are so acclimated that the night air will not hurt you, and you are conversant with my temper when roused." But she was implacable.

Brandishing a ferrule, he then shouted with vehemence: "What! Shall I not have precedence and homage by my own hearthstone? I'll teach you the romance of matrimony, beat you like a spaniel and give your bones over for sepulture!"

But she sweetly replied: "Look out for your orthoëpy, my love, or I'll tear your wristband!"

Here we have the vocabulary listed with the generally accepted American pronunciation of

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each word. ˘ indicates a short vowel, - a long vowel, and ' the accented syllable.

azure	azh'-ur
indisputable	in-dis-pū'-ta-b'l
forehead	far'-ed
bedizened	bē-dīz'-'nd; bē-dīz'-'nd
herbage	Best American usage pronounces <i>h</i>
abdomen	ab-dō'-men
exemplary	eg'-zem-pla-ri; eg'-zem'-pla-ri
decorous	de-kō'-rus preferred; dek'-o-rus also used
extraordinary	eks-tror'-di-ner-i
squalor	<i>a</i> like <i>o</i> in <i>odd</i> ; <i>o</i> like <i>o</i> in <i>connect</i>
legends	lej'-endz
legendary	lej'-en-der-i
literature	lit'-er-a-tūr
process	prōs'-es; American usage pronounces <i>o</i> like <i>a</i> in <i>far</i> ; British like <i>o</i> in <i>old</i>
telegraphy	te-leg'-ra-fi
calligraphy	ka-lig'-ra-fi
finance	fī-nans'; short <i>i</i> preferred
aspirant	as-pīr'-ant
Parliament	par'-li-ment
exorcise	ěk'-sor-sīz
epoch	ěp'-ok
advertisement	accent on second syllable preferred with short <i>i</i>
sacrifice	sak'-ri-fiz
apothecosis	a-poth-ē-ō'-sis
patron	pā'-trun
piquant	pē'-kant; <i>a</i> pronounced as <i>husband</i>
alternately	al'-ter-nit-li; final <i>a</i> as in <i>senate</i>
meager	mē'-ger

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maintenance	mān'-te-nans
peremptory	per'-emp-to-ri; both <i>e</i> 's pronounced as in <i>end</i>
irrefragable	ir-ref'-ra-ga-b'l
perfect (verb)	per-fekt'
isolated	ī'-so-lāt-ed; long <i>i</i> preferred
irrefutable	ir-rē-fūt'-a-b'l
hymeneal	hī-me-nē'-al
peculiarity	pē-kū-li-ar'-i-ti
bronchitis	bron-kī'-tis
launching	<i>au</i> pronounced like <i>a</i> in <i>arm</i>
raspberry	<i>a</i> as in <i>ask</i>
interstices	in-tur'-sti-sēz
larynx	lar'-ings; <i>a</i> as in <i>am</i>
squalid	<i>a</i> pronounced like <i>o</i> in <i>odd</i>
interesting	in'-ter-es-ting
tableau	tab'-lō; <i>a</i> as in <i>ask</i>
dramatis personae	dram'-a-tis per-sō'-nē; second <i>a</i> as in <i>abound</i>
scenario	sē-na'-ri-ō
Elihu	el'-i-hū
pianist	accent on second syllable preferred
dutiful	<i>u</i> as in <i>use</i>
coadjutor	kō-aj'-ōō-ter; English usage, kō-a-jōō'- tor
often	<i>t</i> is not pronounced
harass	ha-ras'
sardonic	<i>o</i> is pronounced like <i>a</i> in <i>arm</i>
inquiry	in-kwīr'-i
virulent	vir'-ū-lent
gaol	like <i>jail</i>
placate	plā'-kāt; first <i>a</i> as in <i>ate</i> or as in <i>ask</i>
flaccid	flak'-sid
oleomargarine	o-lē-ō-mar'-ja-rēn

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pariah	pa-rī-a
antique	an-tēk'
Italian	i-tal'-yan
almonds	<i>a</i> as in <i>arm</i> ; do not pronounce <i>l</i>
musings	<i>u</i> as in <i>use</i>
esoteric	es-ō-ter'-ik; both <i>e</i> 's as in <i>end</i>
vagaries	va-gār'-iz
changeable	chān'-ja-b'l
chameleon	ka-mē'-lē-un
attitude	<i>u</i> as in <i>use</i>
languor	<i>u</i> is not pronounced
condolence	kon-dō'-lens
allopathy	a-lop'-a-thi; <i>o</i> as in <i>odd</i>
pyramidal	pī-ram'-i-dal
cynosure	sī'-no-shoor; <i>u</i> as in <i>sure</i>
tatterdemalion	tat-er-dē-māl'-yun
lounge	<i>ge</i> like <i>j</i> in <i>joke</i>
grimaces	gri-mās'-es
gibberish	<i>gi</i> like <i>j</i> in <i>joke</i>
docile	<i>i</i> as in <i>in</i>
gondola	gōn'-dō-la
relieve	rē-lēv'
granary	first <i>a</i> as in <i>ask</i>
produce	prō'dūs; <i>u</i> as in <i>use</i>
raillery	rāl'-er-i
blatant	blā'-tant
blackguard	<i>ck</i> not pronounced; final <i>a</i> as in <i>arm</i>
truculent	truk'-ū-lent
obligatory	ob-lig'-a-tō-ri
exhaust	<i>x</i> like <i>gs</i> ; <i>h</i> not pronounced
strength	<i>g</i> is pronounced
enervate	en'-er-vāt; first <i>e</i> as in <i>end</i>
constitution	kon-sti-tū'-shun
neither	nē'-ther or nī'-ther

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decadence	American usage, dē-kā'-dens; British, dek'-a-dens
Communist	kom'-ū-nist
bouquet	bōō-kā'
brooch	brōch
diamonds	<i>a</i> is pronounced
jocund	jok'-und; <i>o</i> is like <i>a</i> in <i>arm</i>
dolorous	dol'-er-us; first <i>o</i> as in <i>odd</i>
acclimated	a-klī'-mi-ted
conversant	kon'-vur-sant
roused	<i>s</i> like <i>z</i>
implacable	first <i>a</i> as in <i>at</i>
ferrule	fer'-il
vehemence	vē'-ē-mens
precedence	prē-sēd'-ens
homage	pronounce <i>h</i> ; <i>o</i> as in <i>odd</i>
spaniel	span'-yel
sepulture	sep'-ul-tūr; final <i>u</i> as in <i>use</i>
orthoëpy	or'-thō-ē-pi

The Need for Some Standard

Those of us who desire to pronounce correctly would find our path simpler if we had some hard and fast guide. In the case of the English tongue, we travel toward an elusive goal. Correct pronunciation, based as it is on usage, bows to changing fashions, and fashions change in not one but several centers of culture.

With French, the student has no such difficulty. Professors of that language can and do tell their students that they can hear French correctly pronounced in Paris at the lecture, at the church

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services, and at the state theaters. But the English tongue knows no such compact borders as the boundaries of France, and no recognized center of national culture comparable to Paris. We commonly hear that the best English accent is spoken in Dublin. We know we can hear the tongue admirably spoken in London, Edinburgh, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, and Cape Town. But a subtle difference exists between the intonations of London and Edinburgh and between New York and San Francisco, and between Toronto and Cape Town.

Academically, we can find the established rules of accent in a good standard dictionary where words are considered in relation to their descent and bring with them accents from their Greek or Latin or Anglo-Saxon pasts. Practically, we must base our standard on that which is the accepted usage of contemporary culture. Cultivated people in the cities we have listed pronounce their mother tongue in much the same way and with only minor differences in intonation.

Ways to Achieve Correct Pronunciation

No one can pronounce our words for us; we must do it ourselves. No one can learn correctness for us; we must deliberately make the effort to learn it for ourselves. The chances for each of us to achieve correct speech are greater today than they

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have ever been before. It is for us to avail ourselves of them.

We have to admit the fact that our shortcomings in speech are due mainly to laziness. We know how to look up words in the dictionary but we have not bothered. We have the courage to ask an authority how to say "exquisite" or "hospitable" but we have not bothered. As a result we fail to say "ex'-quise" and "hos'-pitable." Our failure to say even those two words correctly may, for all we know, create an unfavorable impression.

Here are some basic rules which if followed will lead to the achievement of correct speech:

1. Take as your model the speech of the educated people in the community in which you intend to live.
2. Be natural. Avoid all affectations of pronunciation which differ from the standards set by the best speech in your community.
3. Avoid the use of unfamiliar words. Substitute words which you normally use and can pronounce. Make sure, however, to find out both the meaning and the pronunciation of the words you avoid. Make them part of your vocabulary.
4. Speak clearly. Use the tone-producing machinery you have—your mouth, your lips, your tongue—to secure clear enunciation.
5. Do not talk with your mouth shut, through your teeth, or through your nose.
6. Avoid slovenliness of speech. Give each syllable its proper value. Do not copy slovenly announcers who say "progr'm" for "pro-gram." You would not say "kilo-

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gr'm." Sound the last syllable to the last letter in all words ending in "-ing." Instead of "seein', hearin', and believin'," say "seeing," "hearing," "believing."

7. Give all vowels their proper value. The vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* give to speech intensity, purity, and music.
8. Understand the meanings of the words you use. Make sure you pronounce correctly and distinctly the words with which you have no difficulty.

The study procedure for acquiring a wide and correct speaking vocabulary is as follows:

Secure a pocket notebook.

Write down each word stumbled over during the day.

Write down each new word encountered during the day.

At night, check these words in a standard or special pronouncing dictionary. List beside each in your note book the preferred pronunciation and the meaning.

Say them aloud correctly.

Form sentences using the new words in their correct meaning.

Make a point of introducing these words into your conversation as soon after mastering them as possible.

If two or more persons in the same house, office, or club study together, each day's lesson becomes more animated and more useful, for your companion in study has his new words also to learn and use. You can trade words, pronunciations, and meanings as boys trade stamps. Deliberately, in conversation with your fellow student, you can use correctly the words just learned. Through use such words become familiar; you no longer

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stumble over them; they form a part of your verbal equipment.

If you master ten a day, you have, by the end of the first month, increased your verbal equipment by at least three hundred words.

Years ago, a country boy attending Dartmouth College had the ambition to use his mother tongue with correctness and precision. He started for himself the conversation game we have just indicated, and resolved to use at least one new word correctly during each meal he took at his village boardinghouse table. Years later that country boy had realized his ambition so thoroughly that he became editor-in-chief of *The New York Times*.

Another useful group exercise, which falls almost under the head of a parlor game, is the pronunciation bee modeled on the spelling bee of old. Here competing sides choose captains and line up facing each other. The group leader sits with a standard dictionary or a pronouncing dictionary, and gives to each player in turn, not the pronunciation of the word, but its spelling. The player responds with both pronunciation and meaning. The advantage of using a dictionary for this game is obvious; it means the presence of the recognized authority to settle all disputes.

Use the Radio as a Guide

The radio has brought to every home the chance to hear English spoken carefully and correctly.

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To take advantage of that opportunity, you must make an effort. You will never improve your speech by listening haphazardly to all that comes over the air from "Little Gray Home in the West" to the latest recipe for soup. You must pick and choose. Consult your radio programs for those hours at which outstanding men and women of accepted cultivation are announced to speak. Probably there is not an hour of the day or night when some speaker of the first order is not on the air. Tune in and listen with your notebook in hand. When the speaker uses a word with a pronunciation that differs from your own, jot it down and accent it as you heard it. At the end of the talk, check up both on yourself and on the speaker by consulting your dictionary. This conscious effort directs your attention. In achieving correct speech, as in achieving anything worth while, one must make the effort.

The only royal road to correct speech is constant association with it. If your circumstances and surroundings are such that correct speech comes constantly to your ears, then you will acquire correct speech without much effort on your part. If you are not so placed, you must make the effort to secure such association, by listening to the users of the best speech in your community or by tuning in whenever possible on the speeches by users of correct English which come to you over the air.

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The Use of Slang

People who really comprehend the nature of slang, that is, people of education, are the least fussy about it. They understand that most slang words and phrases are ephemeral, that they pass quickly into the discard. Through overuse, such slang becomes as tedious and boring as the conversation it was invented to enhance. They know, on the other hand, that slang also adds useful words and phrases to the language. The Paris actor's slang for his make-up box, the word "camouflage," remains the chief contribution of the slang that the World War coined. The phrase "up against it" has passed from slang into good usage; so has that useful little word "gadget." One may use slang without using a slangy pronunciation. Apply to it your regular rules of correct enunciation.

Many people of cultivation frankly enjoy slang; they get a "kick" out of it denied to its exponents of the alley. Why? Let us answer the question by saying that one cannot appreciate any variation from the norm unless one first knows the norm. As a critic remarked, one does not enjoy the sight of George Bernard Shaw knocking down ideas and concepts unless one has first met those ideas standing upright on their feet. It was not Whittier but the scholarly Lowell who delighted to write poems in Yankee slang and dialect.

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Beauty in Speech

Even when we know how to speak our mother tongue correctly, we need not rest on our laurels. We can go further and strive to speak it with distinction. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of the "love of lovely words." That love need not be limited to poets and musicians. The vast resources of our language give us a wide range in the choice of words. When we let our ears guide us, we choose words with pleasant sounds in preference to the less pleasant. We discard "Britain" and "British" for "England" and "English" even at the risk of annoying our Scottish friends. In countries that have an oral culture, where the ear for centuries has been the guide, we find beautiful rhythms and sounds. The Irish peasant has no book learning. He has obtained his culture by word of mouth, by listening to the village storytellers and ballad singers and the rhythms of the Offices of the Church. As a result, he speaks rhythm and poetry as a matter of course.

Regional Speech, Monotony, and Rhythm

The first thing that dramatic schools in London and New York do with students of speech and acting, who come from all parts of England and America, is to strive to comb out the regional intonations from their speech. Many of these regional intonations may have a pleasant sound but they

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remain regional. The schools endeavor to train their students to speak English as most cultivated people speak it, with an intonation that knows no regional boundaries.

Otis Skinner, the actor, when receiving the gold medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters for good diction on the stage, made this pungent comment on contemporary pronunciation:

In our own country the diversity of vocal tang is perhaps not so noticeable because it is spread over such vast areas and our ears have grown callous to a universal sloppiness of utterance. We do not forget that we are a democracy and in our great republic every man has a right—a constitutional right—to free speech, and “age cannot wither nor custom stale its infinite variety.”

In the pot-pourri one hears the puritanical nasality of New England, the shrill and raucous emphasis of Pennsylvania, the soft negroid of Virginia, bred of generations of black mammies’ crooning to the babies, the drone of the mountaineer, the flat tones of Kentucky and Tennessee, the assertive *r* of the Middle West, the Scandinavian lilt of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and—God save the mark!—New Yorkese. Upon the speech of these sections has been superimposed the influence of every known language from Polynesia to Kamschatka. It is shot at our ears from the lips of public servants, saleswomen and our charming girl graduates, from Rotary and Kiwanis gatherings, from legislative halls and women’s luncheon clubs. Its most devastating influence is all too frequently found in the unchastened accents of instructors in our public schools.

In this welter of mispronunciation—this catarrhal Babel—we must seek the material of which the future hope of

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the American theatre is formed. The first step in the development of our young actors is to rid them of the influence of linguistic neglect, and it is astonishing to find how tone deaf most of them have become.

When he was a professor at Columbia University, John Erskine complained of the monotony of contemporary speech. Writing in *The Nation*, he said:

The first complaint I should make against our speech is that it is horribly monotonous—it hasn't tune enough. Perhaps you might say that the immigrant races other than English have mastered the words, but have wiped out the tune altogether. That theory doesn't account for the awful level on which the New England voice can move in its purest moments of tradition. Are we losing our ear? Is language for us an appeal only to the eye?

The production of good sounds is a physical matter, to be learned as soon as we are interested in it. When we Americans study singing, we learn to make the sounds in the right way, and we profit by the knowledge so long as we are singing. When we talk, we are as bad as ever. We are probably ashamed to make as pleasant sounds as we could among our own people; they would miss the beauty and suspect a social pretension.

Perhaps this question of speech, which seems to be a matter of the head, will be solved through our feet. We are devoted in this country to dancing, and through that art we may become sensitive to all the other arts. The question of speech is a question of rhythm; good writing is a question of rhythm. If we obtain complete sanity in our bodily life, no fear but we shall gradually come to a feeling for lovely speech. We may be encouraged by what is going on in our

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elementary schools, where our youngest children are taught to draw with rhythm, to model with rhythm, to sing, to dance and to act rhythmically. Those children speak rather better than we do; their virtues may creep up on us little by little, until we own a speech not to be mistaken for anyone else's, a speech pleasant to listen to, full of fine sounds. Full of ideas, too, let us hope. But if not, there are many great ideas already in the world, and not nearly enough beauty.

It is impossible to stress too greatly the value of precise and correct speech. For it is the spoken language that counts in life and in literature—so much so that the great men in literature have usually tried to bring the written word into harmony with the spoken. The spoken contemporary speech sets the style.

CHAPTER IV

INCREASE YOUR WORD RANGE

The need for an adequate vocabulary. Statistics on word range. How our language develops. How to get the most benefit from the dictionary. Denotation and connotation. Cross-word puzzles and other games as vocabulary builders. The Thesaurus and its use.

When Lytton Strachey sought to explain the preeminence of Queen Elizabeth, he put it down to her "command over the resources of words." If we wish to explain the preeminence of our present-day leaders in government, business, the professions, or public life, we must give full credit to the same invaluable asset—the command over the resources of words. The acquiring of a good vocabulary ranks as a prime necessity. Words constitute the medium through which we express our thoughts; words are the medium by which others—the writers, speakers, thinkers of past and present—transmit their thoughts to us.

While the ability to pronounce words correctly is of great importance, the ability to understand them and to make use of them is of even greater importance.

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In *Pygmalion*, George Bernard Shaw gives sparkling illustrations of this. By a somewhat grim and determined study of phonetics—the science of pronunciation—Eliza, the London street flower girl who is the play's heroine, develops her speech so that it falls upon the ear with the elegant precision of Park Lane. But poor Eliza's thoughts and her vocabulary still ring with the cheerless flatness and simple-mindedness of her Billingsgate background.

Each word conveys an idea. No two words are quite alike; no two words convey exactly the same idea. Accordingly, the more words we have, the more ideas we are able to enjoy. Our words form the main channel through which our thought processes express themselves. Men with good brains but poor vocabularies find themselves handicapped at every turn. Without words, the ideas of which they feel capable cannot take form. To quote from Tom Paine, "Thoughts are a kind of mental smoke, and require words to illuminate them."

Statistics on the Size of Vocabularies

How many words have we at our command to illuminate our thoughts? The actual number differs with each individual. Nevertheless, all of us can truthfully answer the question by saying: "Not nearly enough." How many words should

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we have? If we want to vote in New York State we should know at least 4,000. At any rate, that is the number suggested by the State Department of Education as the basis of a literacy test for voters. How does this figure compare with the findings of word statisticians?

Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, managing editor of Funk & Wagnall's *New Standard Dictionary*, has decided, after a lifelong study of words, that the well-schooled physician, minister, or lawyer must know how to use 25,000 words or more. The average businessman gets along on 10,000 or less; the average college graduate acquires the use of more than 20,000. The average individual, not especially educated, knows from 3,000 to 10,000.

Woodrow Wilson in three of his books used 60,000 distinct terms, but in the first seventy-five speeches he made after becoming President, he used only 7,000. He wrote for the educated; he spoke to the multitude.

From these statistics one can gauge the size of the average vocabulary, but those of us with ambition would deny that the literacy minimum of 4,000 represents in any sense the adequate vocabulary.

The statistics have points of interest. For one thing they show that the first-class professional man of today is master of more words than Shakespeare was. Dr. Vizetelly claims 25,000 as such a

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man's verbal scope. Shakespearian scholars have estimated that Shakespeare used 23,000. The reason behind this odd state of affairs is the very normal and understandable one that thousands of new words have come into daily use in our English language since Shakespeare's time. We all use hundreds of words in our ordinary life which Shakespeare never knew and could not know, for inventions and discoveries have brought new terms into our tongue.

The important thing for us to realize is that Shakespeare, in order to muster a vocabulary of 23,000 words, an extraordinary equipment in his day, had to work for it. He had deliberately to seek out his vocabulary and master it. Professor George Cotton Taylor of Harvard University has written of one of the poet's main sources of words.

In 1603 Florio published his translation of Montaigne's essays, a task so exacting that he was obliged to draw upon every available source of words in our language, and then to "press into service foreign emissaries, words new and never spoken before in England." Shakespeare fell upon this translation as a treasure store and the plays he wrote during the next few years abound in the expressions he found there. A decade later he apparently read Florio again, for the plays of that period, notably *The Tempest*, abound in Florio's locutions.

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Shakespeare made the words he borrowed his own. He was not content to understand vaguely what they stood for. He learned them in all their shades of meaning, so that they were his to use when, where, and how he chose. He obtained command over their resources. As a result, he had in his possession not only a wealth of words, but such an understanding of them that he could, when he wished, use that wealth with simplicity, with unerring direction, and with felicity.

“Words, Words, Words”

When the inquisitive old Polonius came upon the young Prince of Denmark in an early scene of Shakespeare's great play, he asked:

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

Hamlet was presumably referring to the 23,000 of them which his creator knew. But that was before the day of radio, the cinema, aviation, sport, and the phraseology of new scientific theories. Radio alone is supposed to have added 2,500 words to the language. The English vocabulary grows apace. That has been its tendency throughout its history.

It was in the fourteenth century that the East Midland dialect was adopted as the English language and the chaos of differing speech in England

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was brought to an end. But from the time of Chaucer to the present day the history of our tongue has been a history of development. We can trace this steady trend through Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, through the age of classicism and the Restoration, through Pope and Swift and Addison to Doctor Johnson's Dictionary.

At this point those of us interested in acquiring new words may well pause. For as Professor George H. McKnight, author of *Modern English in the Making*, has remarked, "If the story of the English language has one leading character, a single hero, that hero is Dr. Samuel Johnson."

Then on from Dr. Johnson, through the stern regulation of the eighteenth century; through the Victorian period when the Industrial Revolution added so many processes to life and so many new words with each process, when the scientific findings of Darwin and Huxley gave birth to the theory of evolution and hundreds of additional new words; through the Great War up to the present day, the English language has maintained and even increased its reputation for hospitality. It coins new words, it changes old words, it borrows words and phrases from its sister languages.

How Words Come and Go

To illustrate the way in which our language deliberately coins words, let us take the word "boy-

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cott." It now means: to refuse social or commercial relations with a person, class, or nation (*Oxford Dictionary*, American edition). How did we get the word? Our language made it from a proper name. Captain Boycott happened to be the first person to suffer ostracism at the hands of the Irish Land-Leaguers. His name figured widely in the newspapers. Members of Parliament referred to him in their speeches. He little dreamed that his name would go down in history and retain its hold on the public. It did so because it filled a blank in the language. To boycott means more than merely to ostracize.

Other proper names have also contributed to the growth of the tongue. "*Adam's* apple" comes from the story of the "forbidden fruit," as does also the phrase "daughters of Eve." The knot tied by Gordius survived its cutting by Alexander of Macedon, and today when one talks or writes of having cut the *Gordian* knot one means that one has solved a seemingly inextricable difficulty or problem. "Buncombe" still holds it own. It may very well do so. One encounters so much of it on every hand. Ever since "Blizzard" was taken over by our tongue to describe a snowstorm, that family name has held its place as a common noun in English. We have likewise taken over the names of scientists and inventors to designate matters medical, surgical, pathological, anatomical, and, leaving the hos-

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pital for another laboratory, electrical. Skipping in the first group from A to Z, we shall limit our illustrations to Addison's disease and Zuckerkandi's convolution. From the electrical laboratory we pick out such proper names as Ohm, Henry, Watt, Volta, Ampère, Faraday, and Joule. They all survive as terms in the units of the ohm-ampere system.

Let us examine the changes that words undergo with time. Like coins, they all started out freshly minted, each with its clear superscription. Hard usage has treated them much as it treats old pennies. It has rubbed smooth their denominations and today one has to search to see what worth they had originally. Unlike some rare coins, words have the habit of declining in value as they grow older.

Take, for example, the word "hussy." One hundred years ago that word stood for a thrifty "housewife." Now it has degenerated to mean quite the opposite. Four hundred years ago the word "virago" meant a heroic woman. Today it means a shrewish woman. A "wretch" was not at all wretched at the start. Othello while deeply in love with Desdemona calls her his "excellent wretch." A "prude" once signified merely a prudent person. The words "villain" and "boor" once stood as terms to denote the honest countryman. "Knave" once meant a servant and a "varlet" was a candidate for knighthood. If you called a man a "mis-

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creant" in bygone days, you meant that he differed from you in theology. If you call him one today, you must prove just cause or he may sue you for slander.

Here are some other words which now have meanings vastly changed from their original ones. Greece honored its famous seven wise men of early times by calling them "sophists." Later the word "sophist" came to mean a man who pretended to know more than he did, or one who sold his wisdom to the highest bidder for the basest of purposes, that of making a wrong cause seem right. When Pythagoras assumed the title "philosopher," it meant a lover of wisdom, for "philosophy" once covered the sum total of human knowledge. Now we limit the term to speculative metaphysics. When Plato suggested that states should be ruled by philosophers, he did not mean professors of metaphysics. Such changes in meaning have come to so many words that we must make sure in looking them up in the dictionary that the usage we have in mind for them is not marked "Obs." for obsolete or "Vul." for vulgar.

To illustrate the way in which the English language borrows from other tongues, we have only to take an inventory of our wardrobe and the things that appertain to it to find our indebtedness to the French language. We note at once: "robe," "chemise," "cravat," "trousseau," "crepe," "coif-

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fure," "pommade," "blouse," "beret," "cloche," "modiste," "mode," "vogue."

The English tongue has always been hospitable. It believes in free trade in words. While this tends to give it a vast range, it has also tended to make the language ambiguous. France, on the other hand, is very cautious when it comes to admitting new words and usages into its language. Its famous Academy keeps a strict guard over it. Every Thursday of the year the "forty immortals" who make up the Académie française devote themselves to the task of revising the dictionary. They comb it for words to be discarded; they protect it from words that clamor for admittance. One of the words that is trying hard to get in is the word "midinette," which describes the trim, smartly turned-out dressmakers' assistants who throng the Paris boulevards at the lunch hour. To date the Academy has looked with stern and steady disfavor on the word, with the result that one finds midinettes everywhere in Paris but in the dictionary.

A Spur to Effort

The English language needs no apologists for its hospitable ways, which have resulted in a tongue of amazing variety and richness. That we can never hope to catch up with its ever increasing vocabulary should not discourage us. Rather it should give greater zest to our efforts to increase our own knowl-

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edge and use of words. The greater the number of words available, the greater the opportunity to add to the store of those we have. English is perhaps the greatest medium for the expression of human thought and human feeling. Joseph Conrad, born a Pole, and conversant with the chief tongues of Europe, deliberately chose English in preference to the rest when he came to write his great stories of the sea. As Nicholas Murray Butler has said:

If our speech lacks some of the characteristics of the ancient Greek, some of the characteristics of the modern French, and some of the characteristics of the modern German, nevertheless it combines a simplicity, a scope, a variety, and a sonorousness that are all its own.

Form the Dictionary Habit

As the chief aid in increasing our vocabulary, we must first form the dictionary habit. In the dictionary we find the words that make up our great verbal heritage as English-speaking persons. But these words are of slight use to us if we leave them in the dictionary.

The dictionary does its part in our vocabulary-building program by listing, spelling, explaining, and defining the words it contains. Our part is to consult it, to study the words, learn them, take them away from the printed page, imprint them on our minds, and then make use of them. No one can do this task for us. To achieve the great asset

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of a correct and varied vocabulary requires determined effort. We have to strive for it as we do for any other prize in this world.

What do we get from the dictionary?

1. We get the word's correct spelling. Probably more people turn to the dictionary to find out how to spell a word than to verify its meaning. Often the correct spelling of the word tells us something about it, particularly if we happen to know other languages and if we see in the English word the foreign roots from which it sprang.

2. We turn to the dictionary for the word's precise meaning. To give to a word an accurate definition is not an easy task. It sometimes happens that the simpler the word, the harder the work of defining it. Lord Riddell, the London editor, had a story of a Washington dinner party at which all the guests were newspaper writers. Someone made a bet that no one present could write in three minutes a satisfactory definition of the word "time" without including the word itself in the definition. All took up the bet; all tried their hardest; all lost. Like St. Augustine, each could have said: "What is it? If unasked, I know. If you ask me, I know not."

So hard, in fact, is this job of defining words accurately and understandably and succinctly that even some of the famous dictionaries have fallen down on the score of clarity in some of their definitions.

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When Webster's Dictionary described a horse as: "A large, perrissodactyl ungulate animal, domesticated by man since a prehistoric period, and used as a beast of burden, or draft animal, or for riding; by extension, any kind of allied extinct species," we deserved to be excused if it took us some time to recognize our old friend Dobbin.

To describe "network," Dr. Johnson scratched his mighty forehead and wrote: "Anything reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections." Network? Why, of course.

Should we need further illustrations to show how hard the definition of easy words can be, we have the classic story of Plato, who called man "a two-legged animal without feathers." Diogenes, in rebuttal, plucked a rooster and brought it into the Academy, saying "This is Plato's man."

Lest these amusing curiosities of definition dishearten you, we hasten to add that in most cases the best dictionaries give admirably clear definitions of the great majority of the words they list.

3. We go to the dictionary for etymology. We can refer to etymology as the word's family tree. The etymological references that the dictionary gives show us the ancestors from which the word in question sprang. We need not look far into these references before we realize how many of our words come to us from the classic tongues, Latin and Greek. If we note the component parts of each word

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and the meaning of each part, we come near to grasping the word's real significance. Often words that we use daily and carelessly become immediately picturesque and very much alive if we see what their component parts really mean. Such knowledge, because it startles us into interest, enables us to remember.

Here are a few old friends from the Latin, given with the original etymological meaning:

e-normous—out of the usual rule or norm

extra-vagant—wandering outside

extra-ordinary—outside of the common order or method

ex-orbitant—outside the track or orbit

Jot down in your word notebook the meaning of each part of the word if it has ancestors, as well as the workaday definition for the word which the dictionary gives. In this way the word will have an imaginative quality in your mind as well as a tangible one. You will come to have more use for it; you will use it more appropriately and with greater effect.

4. We go to the dictionary to ascertain usage. The dictionary tells us by means of bracketed notations against certain words whether they are now dead ones (obsolete); whether they have a specialized scientific meaning (scientific); whether they are old-fashioned and quaint (archaic); whether they have regional limitations (dialectic); or

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whether they belong to the realm of the muses (poetic). These classifications cover the main notations which in abbreviated form appear after the words in question. An unabridged dictionary will usually supply quotations from recognized authors which indicate concretely the word's usage. When a word occurs without such qualifying notations, we can assume that it is in current use and satisfies all the verbal formalities.

5. We go to the dictionary for idiom. Words have a way of making friends with each other and keeping company just as human beings do. As with human beings, there is often little reason for their associations. Sometimes these are quite accidental. Frequently they are quite illogical. Because of this, we cannot reason about the idiom; we just have to learn it. This old habit which words have, this idiomatic association, forms a vast stumbling-block to foreigners trying to learn our language and a stumbling-block for us when we try to learn theirs. In our own speech we have less trouble with idioms for "we the people" have developed them all. Many of them we use automatically and correctly. When we are in doubt we can consult the dictionary. For instance do we "inveigh *upon*" or "*inveigh against*"? The dictionary will tell us.

Logan Pearsall Smith in his useful book, *Words and Idioms*, explains how many of them came into being. Many of our idioms spring from the fact

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that the English were a seafaring people who borrowed words from each shore at which their ships touched and enriched even the vocabulary of the stay-at-homes with terms from their nautical experiences.

But it was not necessary to travel to develop idiom. Dr. Smith lists some two hundred idioms based on the human head—"to keep one's head," "to lose one's head," "to stand at the head," etc.

The best way to become assured of idiom is to listen to the best speakers and read the books and articles of the best writers.

6. We go to the dictionary for the final ruling on how to pronounce our mother tongue.

Denotation and Connotation

We cannot proceed far in the study of words before we come to the point where we must consider not only the word's *denotation* but its *connotation*. When we reach that point, we know that we are unable to use a word correctly until we have grasped its full value under both these terms.

What do we mean by a word's denotation? By that term we mean merely what the word actually denotes or signifies when it stands stripped before us.

What do we mean by *connotation*? Using the same figure of speech, we can say that connotation describes the word when it is clothed in all the meanings that association and time have given it.

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Words, unlike rolling stones, gather many impedimenta as they come to us through the ages. This accumulation—colorful, intellectual, and emotional—adds enormously to the value of the word as we have it today.

If we could use words merely according to their denotation, we should find it all very easy, but we should also find it dull, stereotyped, and uninteresting. Words would then be merely symbols. It is when we come to use words with regard to their connotation that we find the satisfaction of using them in all their fullness.

The following words selected to illustrate denotation and connotation are words that instructors have frequently used. Their popularity for illustrating words means that they do this job well.

Skylark

Denotation: A species of bird found in the Old World.

Connotation: The connotation of skylark would appear to deny this ornithological limitation. "Hail to thee, blithe spirit, bird thou never wert." Poetic fancy, spiritual aspiration; the soaring quality of the mind and soul.

Churchyard

Denotation: The enclosure surrounding a church.

Connotation: Gray's immortal elegy comes at once to mind—the yew tree's shade, the graves of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet," quiet, moss-covered stones, the smell of decaying vegetation. A haunt of peace.

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Babylon

Denotation: City in ruins on the Euphrates, south of Bagdad.

Connotation: "If I were a King in Babylon. . . ." A picture of Oriental pomp and luxury, the "hanging gardens," gold, jewels, purple, and fine linen and the naked, gleaming bodies of a million slaves. "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." A symbol of the might of empire and of its transitory glory and ultimate fall.

Oxford

Denotation: County town, Oxfordshire, England.

Connotation: "The dreaming spires of Oxford," the "last enchantment of the Middle Ages." The world's most famous seat of learning. The "home of lost causes" and of humane ideals.

More about the Dictionary

Once we recognize the importance of the dictionary in our task of vocabulary building, we begin to realize the necessity of securing one completely adequate to our purpose. Dictionaries range all the way from the abridged pocket editions, which supply us with the spelling, synonyms, and short definition of a comparatively few words, to the *New English Dictionary*, commonly known as the *Oxford Dictionary*, which took seventy years to compile and cost the Oxford University Press over \$1,500,000 to produce.

This monument of exact and patient scholarship consists of twelve volumes containing 418,825 words, 500,000 definitions, 1,827,306 quotations,

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and 46,464 columns of print, which if placed end-wise would stretch nine miles. The work was started in 1859 under the editorship of Hartley Coleridge, and was once described by Arnold Bennett as "the most sensational serial ever written."

All important libraries will have this great work for reference purposes. It will be there to turn to for the authoritative last word on the English tongue. For everyday use, one should secure a volume less curtailed than the pocket editions and less ponderous than the monument from Oxford. An edition similar to that used ordinarily by college students will fill the bill.

How do words get into these dictionaries? They can get in there by one of three ways. In fact, getting into the dictionary is analagous to getting into society. A word must have ancestors, or influential sponsors, or pots of money behind it. If the word can show that in its component parts it traces its descent from words in good standing in its own or other languages, it stands a good chance of satisfying the requirements. Or if it can get itself used by a person of undoubted culture, preferably one who combines learning with a flair for publicity, it may make the grade. The word "boycott" to which we have previously referred was first sponsored by an Irish savant. And money? Well, no one bribes the lexicographers, but millions spent in magazine and newspaper advertising have established commercial words, patently manufactured words, such as

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linoleum, celluloid, cafeteria, mortician, realtor. The power of the dollar, the lexicographers notwithstanding, has made these and many like them words which all must accept as words in good current, if not in good traditional, standing.

If you jot down words you do not know when you run across them in print or hear them over the radio, you will have an interesting list at the end of the day. Take these words one by one to the dictionary. Make an entry alongside each in your notebook which will enable you to remember its significance. Then make a point of using the new word or words correctly either in writing or in speech. In this manner, simply by making the acquaintance of the verbal strangers you bump into each day, you will add appreciably to your own word range. Ten new words a day may not sound like a vast horde. They are not a vast horde, but they will become one if consistently added to. They mount up to 300 a month and 3,600 in a year. This number, added to the thousands of words you already know, will make an impressive total. Simply by helping yourself to words in this way, you will come to own your share of the vast verbal heritage which rightfully belongs to you.

Books on Words and Idioms

If we wish to build our vocabulary with more intensive study, we shall find many books on the

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library shelves which will help us. One of the earliest in the field still remains one of the best. It is Archbishop Trench's little book called *The Study of Words*. This Victorian scholar wrote on the thesis that words were "fossil history, fossil poetry, fossil philosophy, fossil theology." More recent books are Logan Pearsall Smith's *Words and Idioms* (Houghton Mifflin); George H. McKnight's *Modern English in the Making* (Appleton-Century) and Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (Oxford). These books, the work of experts in the history and development of the English language, give readers a scholarly illumination of the subject. If one chose to make a careful study of these four books, one would emerge with an enviable grasp of this whole fascinating branch of learning.

The books devoted to vocabulary building include *Mark Your Words* by E. L. Yordan (Contemporary Press); *Well-bred English* by Dorothy Eichler (Doubleday Doran); *Century Vocabulary Builder* by Greever and Bachelor (Appleton-Century); *Words Confused and Misused* by M. H. Weseen (Crowell).

While the expenditure of deliberate effort in study remains the best and surest way to reach the goal of a good vocabulary, it is not the only route. Any process by which we gain new words and fix them in our memory is valuable to our purpose, and we consider it as a lift along the road.

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Even games such as cross-word puzzles, anagrams, and others played with the letters of the alphabet can do their part.

Using the Cross-word Puzzle

If used intelligently and deliberately as a vocabulary builder, that popular hobby, the cross-word puzzle, may cease to rank as a mere diversion and pastime and become a valuable instructor. In fact, it has been so used academically, not only to teach English words, but to enlarge the student's vocabulary in Latin or in French. All Gaul is presumably divided into ninety squares.

Teachers of the English language hold before their students two aims—scope and precision. These two qualities do not always go together. The student must be encouraged to know three or four synonyms for the same word. On the other hand he must be discouraged from using at one time all the synonyms he knows. His mind must be made safe for significance.

The cross-word puzzle demonstrates the value of scope, of a wide range of synonyms. At the same time, it insists on precision. The word must have just so many letters. Because of this and because it sends its addicts continually to the dictionary, it is a good pastime for all who wish to extend their verbal ranges. It opens up new horizons, though these tend to narrow down as the puzzle proceeds.

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As an editorial writer in *The New York Times* remarks:

After a while the cross-worder finds himself in a world curiously standardized and restricted. It is a world predominantly of two or three letters ending in a vowel. There is really only one river in the new cosmos. It is the Po. Romulus and Remus evidently made a mistake by concentrating on the Tiber. Egypt made her place in history secure by developing a bird named ibis, and a goddess named Isis. Gutenberg's real contribution to civilization was the em and the pi. In Judea's annals, Solomon's glory has been dimmed by the son of Abijah, who took care to provide himself with two vowels to one consonant—Asa. China has done her bit with lao and tael. Japan almost dominates with yen and her immortal broad sash, the obi. There is only one world-language worth speaking of, it is the Erse. Natural selection operating in the zoological realm favors immensely the survival of the three-lettered animal. The lion and the elephant are dethroned, and in their place rule the emu, the gnu and the eel. If Coleridge's Mariner were living in this cross-world of ours, he would not be carrying an albatross around his neck. He would be proudly sporting an auk. Cross-worders puzzling on the origin of life differ as to whether the auk came before the ovum, or the ovum before the auk.

The Transdeletion Game

Another word game which serves chiefly as a test to one's word range is the game known as Transdeletion. It also has vocabulary possibilities if the winning words culled from the well-thumbed dictionary are made part of the player's word

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equipment. The act of finding them and placing them should aid appreciably in imprinting them on the memory. To play Transdeletion, take a fair-sized word as the starter. Drop a letter and form another word. That done, drop a letter and form another complete word. Continuing the process of dropping a letter each time until you get down to a one-letter word.

For example, take the word "Ypsilanti." That goes down for the first word. Drop a letter and form another word. If one drops the final *i*, enough letters remain to make the word, "ptyalins." Drop a letter and form another word. If one discards the letter *y*, one can jot down the word "plaints." Deleting another letter one arrives at the word "Latins." Deleting the *l*, enough letters remain to spell "saint." Leaving out the *s*, one has the choice of the colloquial "ain't" or the correct "anti." Subtract the *i* and one gets the word "tan." The fewer the letters, the easier. Drop *n* and you near the end with "at." You reach the final one letter word "a" by deleting the *t*. Your sequence reads: Ypsilanti, ptyalins, plaints, Latins, saint, anti, tan, at, a. In this list the only dictionary word is "ptyalins." The others belong to the average vocabulary.

Vogue of Short Words

Present-day usage, particularly present-day American usage, favors the short word. We express

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thoughts in brief declarative sentences. We prefer words that bring thought sharply to the point. The reasons for this lie in the nervous tempo of our age and also in the effect of journalistic English on our spoken style. Because they must write to a restricted space, newspaper writers, particularly headline writers, have combed the language for words of swift announcement. Accordingly, when we read the headlines we become familiar with brisk, nervous, active words. Headlines eliminate the passive; they give us verbs that run around and do things. We see that these short words do their work quickly and well. Unconsciously we adopt them in conversation. We use them to form our spoken style. Spoken English directly affects written English.

Scholarship is taking note of this tendency. Professor Otto Jespersen of Denmark, speaking before the British Academy, said that the English language is turning into a string of monosyllables and is in danger of becoming as staccato as Chinese.

The idea that long words contain more beauty and more significance than short words dies hard. Even college graduates sometimes hold to it with might and main although they would be embarrassed if asked for literary evidence to support the theory. Good writers have always varied the cadence of their phrases with a happy change from monosyllables to long Latin words, chosen not for their gentility but for their rich thunder. Here

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we have Shakespeare showing us how to employ both:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

The Thesaurus and Its Use

Though more often resorted to by professional gymnasts of language for some special use—fiction writers, editors, translators, and the like—than by amateur word chasers, Roget's classic Thesaurus may be called upon to aid us in the development of a rich and multicolored vocabulary.

The method of using the Thesaurus is a somewhat complicated business and, since that method is lucidly set forth in the book itself, it need not be gone into here.

Of more interest in the present discussion is the way Roget's neatly classified and cross-tabbed word heaps may be used to supplement the dictionary as a guide to word shadings and relationships.

For instance, you commence with the word "eat" and, in tracking it relentlessly through all its listings, you discover with a little shock of surprise, every possible variation of the word, ranging from the rapacious "devour" and the unpleasant sounding "masticate" to the onomatopoeic

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“crunch” and “munch.” If you want to be really thorough, you will press on to “browse”; you will find “feast,” “diet,” “carouse,” and even, en route, the cheerless “starve.” You will end up, a little far-flung perhaps, with “recant” (eat one’s words) and “impoverish” (eat out of house and home).

The chase has been a merry and instructive one. On the way you have encountered many old acquaintances, you have made a few new ones (some of which it would be well to check in the dictionary before using in public), and, better, you have obtained a complete panorama of “eat” with all its possible valleys and plateaus of meanings, and you have acquired at least a feeling for the complex groupings and nuances of meaning covered by that simple little word.

A less complicated and more frequent use of Roget is for the purpose of hunting down that elusive word which you are convinced is the only one to express exactly what you have in mind. It is right on the tip of your tongue but you can’t quite get hold of it—and none of the synonyms that pop so maddeningly into your head will do. At that point consult Roget and, if the word you seek exists, he will bring it to light for you.

One excellent way to master words, their meaning, their usage, and their connotation at the same time is to memorize selections of outstanding verse

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and prose. In this way, too, one builds up a mental library, an asset which will prove of inestimable worth should one later go in for public speaking.

Everyone has in his background poems learned at school and odd verses and passages picked up almost without conscious effort. Why not be sure of having at least twenty good poems in your mental library? Why not have twenty pieces of the best prose, which is equally worth while?

In order to keep available the details you have stored away, it is necessary to repeat them continually. Here you have an excellent method of passing the time while traveling in or waiting for trains or busses or while waiting for someone to keep an engagement with you. Take down one or two selections from the shelves of your mental library and go over them. The time will pass quickly and profitably. These passages, if taken from the best writers, will give you an idea of what can be done with words.

How can we use this mental library to augment our vocabulary? Let a famous English editor answer that question for us.

If you repeat a passage of some great writer of English, like DeQuincey or Charlotte Brontë, in an underground train or on any tiresome journey, you will generally find that you are not sure of some words, and you guess them. When you come home, look up the passage, and see how much better, how inevitable is the word that the writer actually used.

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The inevitableness of the writer's word choice springs from the fact that great writers of prose seek what the French call *le mot juste*—the right word in the right place. Knowing the word in its setting in the sentence, you have its meaning, its usage, and, the chances are, its connotation.

CHAPTER V

READING PURPOSES AND METHODS

Reasons for reading. Range of reading tastes. An aim for reading. Reading with method. Types of reading plans. Useful reading habits.

The reading public in the English-speaking world constitutes a vast army. In the United States, according to a recent survey, the reading public as a whole totals ninety millions, assuming that the literate population above the age of ten reads something. Discounting overlappings, forty million of them buy newspapers, thirty million buy magazines, twenty million read books drawn from the public libraries, between two or three millions rent their books, and from two to five hundred thousand buy them.

Reading is a pursuit in which, as in any other, the practitioners separate themselves into groups of original and unoriginal minds. Because the last group is immeasurably the larger, we might place it first. It springs from the laudable increase in popular education and the drop in cost of the printing processes. It is a group that has not yet passed from the creation of appetite to the cultivation of

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judgment. Although a horde of writers and publishers keep feeding this appetite with adulterated or inferior brands of literary nourishment, its condition is far from hopeless. As education spreads its beneficent influence, the development of public taste inevitably increases.

The intelligent reading public, the original minds, apart from specialized coteries of literati which tend to become ingrown, can answer to this description of them from the pen of John Drinkwater:

They are citizens who read for cultivated enjoyment and whose taste for literature is founded at once upon a catholic indulgence of this pursuit and a rational contact with the experience of life. These people are as little affected by the judgment of the minority where intellect has become a pathological misfortune as by that of the multitude where intellect can hardly be said to function at all.

The vast throng whose taste is still in the making and the comparatively meager group whose taste is established together form the reading public. All read with varying purposes. What are these purposes? Why do we read? What should be our aim?

Purposes for Reading

1. Many people read in order to gossip. They like to be thought in the swim. They greet a friend with, "You simply must read *Sour Grapes*." They proceed to destroy that friend's pleasure in the

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book, if he does intend to read it, by telling him the story. If the friend asks for their opinion on the book, he gets it in words so overused that they convey no meaning—"extraordinary," "marvelous," "*swell*."

2. Many read to obtain precise information. They wish to feed and cultivate various pedantries, or to use knowledge obtained for the intelligent advancement of themselves in their business or profession. They take to heart Bacon's adage that "reading maketh a full man."

3. The vast majority of readers read to escape from reality, to leave the humdrum and wear and tear of everyday life for a make-believe universe, a "Never, Never Land" of fiction. To meet the constant demand for this "dream world" escape, the presses turn out thousands of tons of reading matter each week.

4. Many people turn to books for inspiration, guidance, and what they term "comfort." They derive inspiration for their own lives by reading of the achievements and heroism of other lives or by reading books deliberately planned to cheer and encourage. They seek guidance in thought and conduct from those books which purport to give it. The comforting quality of books allies itself with the companionable quality. The lonely individual delights to enter, through the right books, a pleasant world of happy, agreeable people.

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5. Some read for aesthetic enjoyment and critical appreciation. They have cultivated taste and standards of judgment. They enjoy style as much as content. They have sophisticated appreciation for the author's subtlety of thought, delicate shades of expression, and charm of writing.

6. Some read for relaxation. This class includes "brain workers" who wish to rest their minds from the problems that have vexed them in the practical world. They do not resemble the addicts of escape fiction for they have no wish to picture themselves in any dream-romance or dream-success story. They turn to books that present a puzzle to be solved or humorous situations to be laughed at.

We could add to this list, but the categories noted cover the main purposes for which men and women and boys and girls turn to books and newspapers and magazines. Summarizing them, we can say that people turn to books for information, for amusement, for relaxation, to pamper their own ego, and for critical appreciation. Thousands of books stand on the shelves to satisfy each of these desires. Thousands of books with that end in view are rolling off the presses at the present moment, and thousands more are in process of being written.

What People Read

While the true artist writes to express himself and works to create that style which he feels forms

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the most perfect medium for that expression, many great writers have honestly striven to please their readers and to satisfy their desire for information or enjoyment. Many good writers and many bad ones frankly cater to one or another of the reading purposes we have just outlined.

Let us now indicate the type of books and articles best fitted to each purpose.

1. The class of reader that turns to reading matter as subject for gossip prefers, naturally enough, the books in the news, the "best sellers." These have been chiefly novels, but nowadays biographies, books on current topics, and inspirational books often exceed fiction in popularity. Frequently "best sellers" deserve their vogue. Sometimes their success depends on an adroit catering to popular whim rather than on literary merit. As a general rule, we can state that the "popular" readers gravitate to books which they feel endorse their own points of view, bolster up their own prejudices, or bear out their own theories about life. Other books preferred by this group of readers are those which supply some thrill or spiciness either in their content or in the author's reputation.

2. The group of readers who seek information fall upon the technical books, the "outline" books, the textbooks in all branches of learning, as well as the growing mass of writing that contributes to popular education.

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3. For this, the largest group of the reading public, which reads as an escape, a great mass of fiction exists. Some of it is excellent, honest storytelling; much of it is cunningly devised merchandise of mediocre merit turned out simply to meet a trade demand.

4. The readers who turn to books for an inspiration can run the whole gamut of writing from the aspirations of the noblest poetry to commercially contrived "pep talks" which cater to the reader's cupidity, promising benefits to soul or body but always to ego. Readers find inspiration in the example of admirable characters and in the assurance that what man has done man can still do. For "comfort," the whole field of religious writing, frequently tilled, lies open.

5. This group, which reads for critical enjoyment, self-consciously limits itself. It regards itself as "precious" in its taste and turns to those writers who feel themselves "precious" in their art. Each age produces writers who ignore popular approval in the sense that they refuse to surrender their own high standards to popular taste. The wisest writers never scorn popular approval but hope that in time the public taste will rise to the extent of appreciating what they have done. This limited group of writers and readers keeps alive the highest standards in literary style.

6. The group of readers who desire relaxation includes a large percentage of highly intellectual

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people. They turn to comic books and to detective fiction with no thought of the literary style or lack of it in such writing; they are eager to find a release, an untying of their own mental knots. Much humorous writing supplies this, for it takes a play attitude toward reality; the well-contrived detective story also supplies this release as it focuses the reader's attention, not on situation or character or philosophical idea, but on the puzzle to be solved. Essentially the interest here, although presented in literary form, is allied to the interest one finds in putting together the scrambled sections of a jigsaw puzzle. Educators, statesmen, and the high-ranking professional men proclaim themselves ardent addicts of detective fiction.

An Aim for Reading

All the foregoing purposes for reading fall short of what we hold as the ideal. Some of these purposes are intelligent, some admirable, and all quite understandable, but none of them separately or collectively answers the question, "What should the true aim of reading be?" Shall we approach the records of the greatest thinking that mankind has done merely to stuff ourselves with facts or theories? Shall we dip into tender, revealing confessions merely to supply ourselves with pseudo-literary chatter? No. The true aim of reading is neither on the one hand to be informed nor on the

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other to be idly amused. What, then, is it? An anonymous reviewer supplies an admirable answer. "The true aim of reading, the only creative aim, should be to increase the range and depth of one's imagination and one's human sympathy."

With this aim the act of reading becomes, as the definition suggests, a creative art. The unprejudiced mind and the open heart, which we bring to reading if we have the ideal aim, also contribute; they add new cerebral and emotional territory.

With this aim, we can seldom think of books merely as "silent friends" or as "comforters." They lose passive significance. They become rather adventures of the mind and spirit. The best writers know and appreciate this aim and have tried and are trying to be worthy of it. "The power and the glory of literature will always be that it enlarges and enriches life."

Reading with Method

The chief advantage which reading in college has over reading in the home is that at college one reads with a plan. We can easily transfer this advantage from the campus to our own firesides.

When we read without method, we can get real benefit but nothing like the benefit that reading with a definite plan will give us. We pick up a book here and a book there. One may be a novel dealing with the immigration of the Basques into Texas;

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the other may be Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives Tale*. The former shows us the contribution of a small foreign race to the development of the American Southwest; the other shows us middle-class life in provincial England with all its social and conventional limitations. These books lie as far apart as their settings. We enjoy both, we gain from both, but in our minds they stay in separate compartments. We are unable to correlate them.

Reading with method means that we link books. If we select the Texas novel and find ourselves interested, we can plan to read other books related to its main subject. We can seek from the library more about the Basques. We find that Dorothy Canfield has a volume of excellent short stories, *Basque People*, which will initiate us into something of their history, their character, their native conditions. We may look for other books on the development of the West. How have the Spaniards helped or hindered? We shall find out, if we want to, in novels, biographies, and histories. We should read Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. If we read five or six books of this type, we find that each adds to the others. We gain, not a mere smattering of the subject, but a comprehensive understanding of that part of the country, its history, and its development.

Arnold Bennett's great novel may open up to us an interesting field, not only of English fiction, but

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of English sociology. We may read more of the same author's stories of the Five Towns. We may want to know something of the great Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century which called these towns into being. Again through novels and biographies and associated literature, we shall emerge with a competent understanding of a very important phase of an outstanding period—the Victorian Age.

No matter how trivial our reading may seem, if we relate it and co-relate it, those very acts give it a new importance. Even if the people who read little beyond detective stories would read with a plan, they would gain a comprehensive idea of the growth of this whole class of fiction entertainment. They can go back to Edgar Allen Poe, the father of the present-day detective novel. In four of his stories, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Purloined Letter*, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, and *The Gold Bug*, he initiated a formula which, with inevitable modifications, remains substantially that of the thriller trade today. Then they can turn to Gaboriau, who took over and elaborated Poe's inventions, and introduced the reading public to his great detective, M. Lecoq. From Gaboriau they can skip across the Channel to Arthur Conan Doyle and *Sherlock Holmes*. Doyle in his turn took over Edgar Allen Poe's formula and made new contributions. From Doyle they can turn to an American

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writer, Anna Katherine Green, whose stories have importance because of their popularity and the impetus this popularity gave to detective fiction writing. And so on, through the more modern exponents, Carolyn Wells, G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, J. S. Fletcher, Agatha Christie, S. S. Van Dine, and Dorothy Sayres. Such a plan, which traces the development of detective fiction from its initial stages to the modern thriller, will give the reader who follows it an understanding of this type of writing. It will give him background for judgment and critical appraisal of the work of each new author who comes along.

Types of Plan

We can suit the general type of plan to our tastes and our preferences. We can limit ourselves to one author and read him through his career, or we can take the same man as our subject and try to understand why he wrote as he did by reading about his times and his friends and his enemies. We can take a definite period like the Renaissance in Europe, or the Victorian Age in England, or the French Revolution, or the American Civil War. We shall find many novels, biographies, and books of general nature written in these periods, and perhaps even more written about them, in that perspective which time always gives to great epochs, great individuals, and great events.

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We can limit ourselves to a subject like music, psychology, the history of art, prison reform, or the development of drama. We shall find that our preferences will lead us to that which we feel we shall enjoy most.

On general principles, we should vary the type of reading within the scheme we choose. Because we are human, we love variety. Too much of the same thing, even too much of a good thing, can pall. Vary straight history with fiction written around the events that history sets forth; vary the novel of imagined characters with the biography that introduces us to the life of a real man or woman.

Use Library Aids

Modern libraries offer many facilities to readers beyond supplying them with books. One of these is the card-index system. Ask an attendant to show this system to you. In it you will find cards listing books under their authors, their titles, and their general subjects. Such cards suggest collateral reading.

The librarians too will help outline your reading if you explain your plan to them. They can cooperate by reserving books for you along the lines of your course, by putting aside books that have come in from circulation, and by drawing your attention to new books in the field. Avail yourself of such library aids, both personal and mechanical. They

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will add to the pleasure and the scope and the ease of your reading.

Should we stick to one book until we finish it? Not necessarily. We may find it more practical, more enjoyable, and perhaps more stimulating to live in two, three, or four books at the same time and to turn from one to another as we feel drawn.

Here is what Sir William Robertson Nicholl, an inveterate reader, had to say on this point:

Sound bookmen always have three or four books on hand at a time. The idea that you should read one book at a time is the idea of those people who think you should dine upon one dish. You go up to your study after dinner and commence reading. There should be at least three books, four are better, awaiting you on the rug. You might begin with a little biography or criticism. Then you should proceed to the book that is really furnishing you with thoughts, of whatever kind it may be. Then you should have in reserve a book of fiction, with which you may close the evening pleasantly. I like, for my part, every night to read, as a last thing, some poetry.

However, if one is notably weak in memory, the best rule is to stick to one newspaper and one good book at a time. By keeping something, you will gradually become able to retain more.

Reading speed comes with practice and differs with most individuals. Sir William, whom we have just quoted, went on record to the effect that he could read, "Where there is no occasion for halting, about 20,000 words in half an hour." That of course

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is pretty fast even for a specialist. The average man or woman accustomed to reading probably gets through only 5,000 words in that time. But at that rate of 10,000 words an hour one could read no less than sixty books a year if one spent only one hour a day in reading.

One Old Book for One New

Although few of us can emulate Sir William Robertson Nicholl's omnivorous reading practices, we can all adopt the sound rule of reading one old book for every new one.

Time alone will tell if the new book that comes to us each day heralded by a fanfare from publishers and book reviewers has enduring merit. In the case of the old book, time has told; it has gained a permanent place. Time pronounces its contents worthwhile.

It is a misfortune that so many of the greatest books of the world should figure on school lists as "required reading." It is unfortunate because the student too often turns to the book as he would turn to a chore. He is made to analyze or parse; to abstract the kernel for examination purposes; to skim through it merely to check it off his reading list. If it is a Latin text, he concerns himself with the vocabulary, the syntax, and the construction, and by so doing he misses completely the sweep and glory of the epic.

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Too often the boy or girl or young man or woman gets a lifelong distaste for a great book. He or she has been forced to read it when not sufficiently equipped to do so, when the experiences of life are as yet too meager to help the understanding. No wonder such readers remain prejudiced against the book.

How different in the case of the reader who meets that book for the first time on a friendly basis! How different the result when the prejudiced reader comes across the book again with a fresh understanding! The cut-and-dried diagram of a battle-field in a school textbook becomes the "ringing plains of windy Troy." The Bible, from which one had to learn six reluctant verses on a stuffy Sunday, becomes the storehouse of poetry and drama, an inspiration to mind and spirit.

Keep a Notebook

When we finish a book and lay it down on the table, we might well ask the question: "What have I to show inside my mind?" At that moment, if we count our answers, we shall find that we have a great deal to show. If we ask the same question one week later or one month later, the result will be far different.

No memory is infallible. All memories benefit by the aids we can easily give them. The habit of making notes of what we read and wish to remember is a habit that rapidly repays us for the trouble

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involved. Let us turn to our notebook while the book just read stays fresh in our minds. It will aid our memory as well as our understanding to write down a short outline in our own words. If we admire a particular passage, we should copy that too. If we happen to own the book and know that we can refer to it when we desire, our notations can take the form of subject and page. If we do not own the book, it will be wise to copy from it the outstanding paragraphs that have appealed to us. If we have found the book really worth while and stimulating, we should have answers in our notebook to these questions:

What is the keynote?

What examples have I from my own experience which maintain the general thesis of the author?

What examples have I which contradict it?

Is the negative or opposite side true? If not, why not?

How can I in my own work and hobbies make practical application of the knowledge I have gained from this book?

Opinions differ on the virtue of marking books. To some it seems a slovenly and destructive habit. To others, it makes the book of more value as it indicates the tastes and opinions and preferences and prejudices of the reader who has marked it. Naturally one marks only one's own books.

If you choose to mark or underscore a passage for future use, don't limit the marking to that selected paragraph. Turn to the back of the book and jot down the number of the page and the subject

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selected—"youthful ability," "definition of war," "new methods of education," etc. In any case, jot down the page number. It will help you as a ready reference index to your own selections.

Building a Library

The more we have to do with books, the more books we shall wish to own. We shall seek to purchase for ourselves the books which we have enjoyed in the public library and which we want to have near us for ready reference.

Few joys can compare to the adventure of opening a new book fresh from the bookstore. If it has pages that have to be cut, there comes the sense of exploration in that particular copy. The pleasure of possessing books grows with each volume added to our shelves.

Perhaps some of the books we wish to own are out of print. This discovery may be the introduction to one of the distinguishing habits of the true book lover—the old bookstore habit, the haunting of the tables on which secondhand volumes are exposed for sale. In London the sign above them will read, "Any book in this bin, sixpence." In New York it may run, "Any book on this shelf, twenty-five cents." There is gold in those bins and shelves. There is a treasure above rubies to lure both children from their play and old men from their chimney corners.

CHAPTER VI

THE ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

Elements of liberal culture. The "outline" books. Suggested reading lists. "Background" books. Understanding English fiction. Trends in American literature. The "best" books.

All that has ever been thought, felt, seen, discovered, and imagined—"the funded capital of civilization"—now finds its way between the covers of books. Never before has the result of scholarship been so readily available to everyone. Merely by reading in our homes we can gain an insight into knowledge which in former days would have cost us endless time in lecture rooms and libraries.

Thanks to the vogue of "outline" books, the background and outstanding developments in every field are now assembled for us from countless sources. If we sought to obtain the same information for ourselves it would take us a lifetime, or perhaps several lifetimes. Today scholars do the ferreting out for us, do the selecting for us, and present readable and illuminating condensations. These "outline" books are literary bird's-eye views.

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A bird's-eye view misses few of the landmarks in its sweep.

What subjects go to make a fundamental background? The subjects which make the basis of general culture and which form the foundation of college curricula are history, English and American literature, science, philosophy, psychology, and the arts.

If we concentrate on man, his achievements, thoughts, speculations, and discoveries, we have a unifying pattern for our background reading. As John Dewey maintains,

Education cannot be unified in the study of science, or so-called nature study, because apart from human activity, nature itself is not a unity; nature in itself is a number of diverse objects in space and time and to attempt to make it the centre of work by itself, is to introduce a principle of radiation rather than one of concentration.

You can through planned and systematic reading cover much of the ground of a college training. Some studies, of course, can be mastered only through laboratory methods and actual experimentation; nor can self-instruction quite replace the experience in learning developed by group discussion. Nevertheless, intelligent reading will supply a valuable grasp of the material. Outline books, condensations, and the like, which now lie ready to hand, can serve us as road maps do. They chart the main routes in the wide territory of our selected

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subjects, indicate the bypaths by which we may travel if some special interest lures us, and spread before us the whole terrain of knowledge. They will help us whether we wish to make a quick tour or a thoroughgoing exploration.

The books selected under each of the fundamental background headings are chosen for their availability, their readability, their comprehensiveness, and their capacity to whet the appetite.

History

The chief study of mankind is Man. Everything about the genus *Homo* holds interest for us. The story of the adventures of our species on this earth is history. Into it go joy, sorrow, failure, success, achievement, progress, retrogression, discovery, exaltation, degradation, high adventure. Long before man invented symbols in which to carve or write his own history, he left records behind him in his rude implements, and simple belongings. Scientific investigation can now illuminate for us even the remotest centuries of man upon the globe. Of the many outlines of history, that by the English novelist and journalist, H. G. Wells, was the first in time and remains first in reputation. Critics have here and there questioned his interpretation. His book remains a monument to his industry, his scholarship, and his powers of presentation. Hendrik Willem van Loon's *The Story of Mankind*

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covers, naturally enough, much of the same ground. It too is the product of a cultivated and informed mind and is written with a geniality of style that at once commends it to the reader.

History

H. G. Wells, "Outline of History," Garden City

H. W. van Loon, "The Story of Mankind," Star

H. E. Barnes, "History of Western Civilization," Harcourt, Brace

T. R. Glover, "The Ancient World," Cambridge University Press

Charles and Mary Beard, "The Rise of American Civilization," Macmillan

J. T. Adams, "The Epic of America," Blue Ribbon

J. H. Breasted and J. H. Robinson, "History of Europe," Ginn

James Bryce, "The American Commonwealth," Macmillan

In such vast panoramas, points of special interest to the individual reader naturally arise. We may wish to find out more about some special race or period than we find in the outlines. History did not follow a level trail. It had its peaks and its valleys. Edith Hamilton, who writes with exact scholarship, keen understanding, and rare charm, has given us books on three races that have contributed out of all proportion to their size in the development of the world's culture: *The Greek Way* (Norton), *The Roman Way*, (Norton), and *The Prophets of Israel* (Norton).

Outstanding races, periods, and personalities have inspired books. In some cases whole libraries of books have been written on one man. Should

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any phase or personality prove of commanding interest during your outline reading, follow up that initial interest by asking for the biographies, the memoirs, or the other specialized books which will satisfy and reward that interest.

Outlines of special phases of history which we encounter in our study fall under such heads as:

Archeology

R. V. D. Magoffin and C. E. Davis, "The Romance of Archeology,"
Garden City

Geography

H. W. van Loon, "Geography," Simon & Schuster

Government

C. A. Beard, "American Government and Politics," Macmillan
Roger Shaw, "Outline of Government," Review of Reviews
Corporation
E. S. Bates, "The Story of Congress," Harper

We can well follow our survey course of man as a species by obtaining an understanding of man as a specimen. Let us think of man as an individual in terms of a threefold entity—body, mind, and spirit. These three subdivisions we can study under the heads of physiology, psychology, and philosophy, which includes religion. Later we can take up man's spiritual adventure as it expresses itself in the various arts.

Physiology and biology are sciences that have to do with the human body, its structure, and its

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development. Psychology, a newcomer among the sciences, investigates the structure and workings of the human mind and brain. Philosophy blends all knowledge and seeks to solve the riddle of the universe.

Physiology and Biology

L. Clendenning, "The Human Body," Garden City

V. Kellogg, "Biology," American Library Association

H. G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, and G. P. Wells, "The Science of Life," Doubleday, Doran

In connection with this general subject, we make an important subdivision under the head of "Evolution" to study the now generally accepted theory initiated by Charles Darwin and outlined by him in his famous *Origin of Species*, published in 1859. T. H. Huxley did more than Darwin in publicizing the theory by lending to its elucidation his superb gifts of exposition. His writings stand forth still as the vanguard of the vast literature now devoted to this theory.

Evolution

J. McCabe, "The A B C of Evolution," Putnam

V. L. Kellogg, "Evolution," Appleton-Century

When we come to psychology, a vast and popular field opens up. Everyone is interested in what he thinks and that interest extends to how he thinks and why he thinks. We all want to know, in the

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words of the well-known title, "Why we behave like human beings."

Psychology

- C. Dorsey, "Why We Behave Like Human Beings," Harper
J. H. Robinson, "The Mind in the Making," Harper
M. Wright, "Getting Along with People," Whittlesey House,
McGraw-Hill
W. A. White, "Twentieth Century Psychiatry," Norton
R. S. Woodworth, "Psychology," Holt

Once we have an understanding of the basic assumptions of psychology, we are better able to weigh the claims of psychoanalysis and may perhaps tackle Sigmund Freud, *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (Liveright).

With an understanding of the mind of man and its workings, we can turn to a consideration of what that mind has thought. The whole range of philosophy now lies before us.

Philosophy

- Will Durant, "The Story of Philosophy," Star
A. M. Barten, "The Philosophy of Life," Star
C. C. J. Webb, "History of Philosophy," Home University
Library, Holt
C. E. M. Joad, "A Guide to Philosophy," Random House

Most men possess, as William James expresses it, the "will to believe." Accordingly, the whole subject of religion is an important subdivision of

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philosophy. It is well for us to know not only why we believe in the creed we hold to but also to understand something of the foundations and dogmas of other faiths. In order not to be one-sided on this highly debatable question, we should balance our reading. If we read a book like Lewis Browne's *This Believing World*, which is written from a non-Christian point of view, we should follow it with an outline of Christianity or some other book that presents the Christian claims.

Religion

R. E. Humen, "Living Religions of the World," American Library Association

S. Reinach, "Orpheus," Liveright

L. Browne, "This Believing World," Macmillan

W. T. Grenfell, "Religion in Everyday Life," American Library Association

Bruce Barton, "The Man Nobody Knows," Bobbs-Merrill

G. Papini, "The Life of Christ," Harcourt, Brace

H. W. van Loon, "The Story of the Bible," Garden City

Closely allied with the religious impulse in the mind of man is the aesthetic one. Man is not content merely to worship; he wishes to enhance that worship with expressions of his own individual gifts. From this desire, many of what we now call "the arts" were born. Under separate headings we list the books that trace their development, beginning with music, the most general and the most widely popular of all the arts.

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Music

- Bauer and Peyser, "How Music Grew," Putnam
S. G. Spaeth, "Art of Enjoying Music," Whittlesey House,
McGraw-Hill
D. G. Mason, "Guide to Music for Beginners and Others," Gray
P. A. Schales, "The Listener's Guide to Music," Oxford
R. T. White, "Music and Its Story," Macmillan
John Redfield, "Music," Tudor
Ernest Newman, "Stories of the Great Operas," Garden City
Paul Whiteman and H. M. McBride, "Jazz," Dodd, Mead
A. L. Bacharach, "A Musical Companion," Gollancz

Dance

- T. and M. W. Kinney, "The Dance," Stokes
John Martin, "America Dancing," Dodge

Drama

- Sheldon Cheney, "Theatre," Tudor
Barrett H. Clark, "The Modern Drama," American Library
Association
Ashley Dukes, "Drama," Holt
Glenn Hughes, "The Story of the Theatre," Samuel French

Architecture

- C. M. Price, "The A.B.C. of Architecture," Dutton
Sheldon Cheney, "The New World Architecture," Longmans,
Green
Kimball and Edgell, "A History of Architecture," Harper
Lewis Mumford, "Architecture," American Library Association
C. H. Whitaker, "Rameses to Rockefeller," Random House

Sculpture

- Lafcadio Hearn, "Appreciation of Sculpture," American Library
Association
C. L. Barstow, "Famous Sculpture," Appleton-Century

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Painting

- C. L. Barstow, "Famous Paintings," Appleton-Century
C. H. Coffin, "Guide to Pictures for Beginners and Students,"
Doubleday, Doran
C. H. Coffin, "The Story of American Painting," Stokes
Thomas Craven, "Men of Art," Simon & Schuster
Thomas Craven, "Modern Art," Simon & Schuster

Literature

- John Macy, "The Story of the World's Literature," Garden City
J. E. Paratt, "The Pageant of English Literature," Nelson
A. Tassin and A. B. Maurice, "The Story of American Literature,"
Macmillan
E. M. Tappan, "Short History of England's and America's
Literature," Houghton Mifflin
Irving Babbitt, "French Literature," American Library Association
F. E. Schelling, "Shakespeare," American Library Association
Elizabeth Drew, "The Enjoyment of Literature," Norton
"The Cambridge History of English Literature," Cambridge
University Press
"The Cambridge History of American Literature," Cambridge
University Press

Poetry

- M. Wilkinson, "The Poetry of Our Times," American Library
Association
Louis Untermeyer, "Modern American Poetry," Harcourt, Brace
Louis Untermeyer, "Modern British Poetry," Harcourt, Brace
Hubbell and Beaty, "Introduction to Poetry," Macmillan
M. J. J. Wrinn, "The Hollow Reed," Harper
"The Oxford Book of English Verse," Oxford University Press
Drinkwater, Canby, and Benet, "Twentieth Century Poetry,"
Houghton Mifflin

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Science

"Science" is here used in the popular and limited meaning of the term. Actually many of the subdivisions already listed might come under the almost all-embracing scope of science.

General Science

- Sir J. A. Thomson, "The Outline of Science," Putnam
Edwin E. Slosson, "The Physical Sciences," American Library Association
J. W. N. Sullivan, "Science: A New Outline," Nelson
Sir James Jeans, "The New Background of Science," Macmillan
Sir Arthur Eddington, "New Pathways to Science," Macmillan
D. E. Richmond, "The Dilemma of Modern Physics," Putnam
A. W. Haslett, "Unsolved Problems of Science," Macmillan
Sir William Bragg, "The Universe of Light," Macmillan
Paul Karlson, "The World Around Us," Simon & Schuster

Astronomy

- F. R. Moulton, "Consider the Heavens," Doubleday, Doran
H. Spencer Jones, "Worlds without End," Macmillan
Harlan Stetson, "Earth, Radio and the Stars," Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill

Botany

- J. H. Fabre, "The Wonder Book of Plant Life," Lippincott
D. C. Peattie, "Green Laurels," Simon & Schuster
F. S. Mathews, "Field Book of American Wild Flowers," Putnam

Medicine

- L. Clendenning, "The Romance of Medicine," Garden City
Ralph Major, "Disease and Destiny," Appleton-Century

Geology

- E. A. Mills, "Romance of Geology," Doubleday, Doran

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Economics

- Henry Clay, "Economics," Macmillan
S. H. Slichter, "Modern Economic Society," Holt
G. H. Moulton, "The Financial Organization of Society," Chicago University Press
D. B. Woodward and M. A. Rose, "A Primer of Money," McGraw-Hill
Franklin Escher, "Modern Foreign Exchange," Macmillan
J. R. Commons, "Industrial Goodwill," McGraw-Hill
W. Z. Ripley, "Main Street and Wall Street," Little, Brown
H. G. Wells, "The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind," Doubleday, Doran

Other "Background Books"

The "outline" books give us a short but a comprehensive introduction to those fundamental fields of learning which, taken together, form a liberal culture. In addition, we must list specific books which for one reason or another now form part of the background of all cultivated people.

What are these books? We can get to the answer by asking another question: From what books come the quotations we run across continually in conversation, letters, public addresses, and articles? The answer is not difficult. All branches of the English-speaking world agree on at least six sources.

Whether we realize it or not, our articulate life each day makes use of quotations from:

The Bible

The plays of Shakespeare

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Aesop's Fables

Alice in Wonderland

The classic myths

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas

The Bible, translated into English in the reign of King James I at the end of the great Elizabethan period when English prose had reached the peak of its development, remains the chief cultural influence in the English-speaking world and is the source of most of our quotations. Its noble prose has a homely and earthy tang to it that men for centuries have taken into their everyday speech.

"Hip and thigh"

"Bite the dust"

"Weighed in the balance and found wanting"

Wash one's hands of

"Highways and hedges"

These are but a few of the hundreds of informal Biblical quotations which are part and parcel of our colloquial as well as of our cultivated speech. It is impossible to stress too greatly the cultural value of the Bible. To quote Goethe, "The greater the intellectual progress of the ages, the more fully will it be possible to employ the Bible not only as the foundation, but as the instrument of education."

The plays of Shakespeare have long established the great dramatist's preeminence in the world of

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literature. Next to the Bible, these plays provide us with many of our unconscious as well as many of our conscious and deliberate quotations. Here are a few that have entered into universal speech.

"To be, or not to be; that is the question:"

"The better part of valour is discretion."

"The observed of all observers."

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

"When shall we three meet again?"

The plots of Shakespeare's plays can be studied in outline form in *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb. Merely to know the plots, however, is to miss the imagination with which he enhanced them and the poetry in which he wrote them. Shakespeare will prove a friend for life. Among the passages from his great plays which should be deliberately memorized are:

Portia's speech from *The Merchant of Venice*—

"The quality of mercy . . . "

Antony's oration at Caesar's funeral—

"Friends, Romans, countrymen . . . "

Polonius's advice to Laertes in *Hamlet*—

"And these few precepts in thy memory . . . "

Hamlet's soliloquy and his speech to the players—

"To be or not to be . . . " and "Speak the speech, I pray you. . . ."

Aesop's Fables, which date from antiquity, made use for the first time of the now widely accepted literary device of endowing animals

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with human characteristics. Such fables as those of the hare and the tortoise and of the fox and the grapes point morals whose wisdom mankind universally accepts.

Alice in Wonderland and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* stand together in the heart of the English-speaking world. These books, written by Lewis Carroll, are ostensibly tales for children, but their shrewd insight, their humor, and their characterizations give continuing enjoyment to the mature reader. Such characters as Alice, the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat, and Tweedledum and Tweedledee are household names.

The classic myths form an important part of the general cultural background in the United Kingdom. For centuries England based its education on the writings of the classic periods of Greece and Rome. Accordingly, "the humanities" remain a rich field for quotation and allusion. The growth of "modern sides" in the great schools and universities has in recent years lessened the wide sweep of the classic culture. Because of a different emphasis in education, the classic culture has never completely permeated the national backgrounds of either the United States or Canada. Modern scholarship has discovered that many of these myths were originally of Northern origin and were carried to the Mediterranean by the invading hordes from the North. The Greeks

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lessened the blood lust in them and made them more humane. We can now enjoy all the classic writings in a variety of excellent translations. In outline form, we can obtain their subject matter in such books as Bullfinch's *Anthology*, Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, and Kingsley's *Greek Heroes*.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas, although given to the world in the 1880's and 1890's, remain perennially popular. With keen humor they satirized many human characteristics and many human institutions. The books and lyrics which form their librettos are the work of W. S. Gilbert, and it is from them that many present-day quotations and allusions come. However, it was Sir Arthur Sullivan's music that gave the words much of their popularity. Together they form one of the most famous teams of collaborators. Such operas as *The Mikado*, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, and *The Pirates of Penzance* have contributed not only to the gaiety of nations but to the cultural background as well. They should be seen and heard. They can also be read in several popular comprehensive editions.

Understanding English Fiction

English fiction forms an integral part of the basic culture of all English-speaking countries. In translations its influence has spread to the

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whole world. The following hints may lead to a clearer understanding of the influences that aided in forming it.

General Characteristic. The dominant feature of English fiction is its insistence on *character*. Man Friday, Mr. Pickwick, Micawber, Sherlock Holmes lead lives in the reader's imagination independent of the stories in which they appear. This insistence on character comes normally enough, for one of the chief sources from which English fiction drew was a form of literary portraiture widely popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, called "Characters."

Sociological Factors. English fiction has flowered chiefly in those periods that held a generally accepted scale of values in moral and social conduct. In periods of flux the novelist must establish his moral and social criteria as well as illustrate them.

Examples of established background:

Anthony Trollope's "Barchester Towers"
William M. Thackeray's "Pendennis"

Periods of changing standards:

The Restoration
Our own times

The influences that mainly control modern English fiction had their beginnings before the

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Victorian era, though they manifested themselves most markedly in that great epoch of scientific and industrial expansion. The new scientific theories, such as that of evolution, seemed at the time of their announcement to challenge religious belief. From this conflict sprang the fatalistic point of view of Thomas Hardy and other writers, and from it still springs much of the agnosticism and skepticism of some succeeding novelists. The years since then have shown that Victorian dogma rather than belief suffered, for the authentic religious impulse, like the authentic scientific one, seeks only the truth. This new awakening to science, even apart from its philosophic import, inspired the literary preoccupation of such writers as H. G. Wells with machinery, apparatus, paraphernalia, and gadgets.

The Industrial Revolution changed the English cast of thought as well as much of the English landscape. It meant the transforming of a society largely rural into one predominantly urban. Vast industrial areas came into being and with them came a new way of living and of thinking for the populace. This change brought new social and humanitarian themes to English fiction. We get a hint of the problems that this new state of affairs raised in such novels as those of Arnold Bennett, in which he deals with the life of his Five Towns, and in much of the writing of

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D. H. Lawrence. In fact, it is not hard to trace in most English novels from those of George Meredith down to the latest to roll off the presses of Fleet Street some reaction to these dominant stimuli—the scientific and industrial revolutions.

From the impressive pageant of English fiction, we select the following books as background builders.

Henry Fielding

“Tom Jones”

Daniel Defoe

“Robinson Crusoe”

Jonathan Swift

“Gulliver’s Travels”

Sir Walter Scott

“Ivanhoe”

“Quentin Durward”

“Kenilworth”

William Makepeace Thackeray

“Vanity Fair”

“Henry Esmond”

Charles Dickens

“Nicholas Nickleby”

“Bleak House”

“Pickwick Papers”

“A Tale of Two Cities”

“David Copperfield”

George Eliot

“The Mill on the Floss”

Charlotte Brontë

“Villette”

“Jane Eyre”

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Anthony Trollope

“Barchester Towers”

George Meredith

“The Ordeal of Richard Feverel”

“Diana of the Crossways”

Thomas Hardy

“The Return of the Native”

“Tess of the D’Urbervilles”

Samuel Butler

“The Way of All Flesh”

George Gissing

“New Grub Street”

Robert Louis Stevenson

“Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”

Oscar Wilde

“The Picture of Dorian Gray”

James M. Barrie

“A Window in Thrums”

Arnold Bennett

“The Old Wives’ Tale”

Joseph Conrad

“Youth”

“Lord Jim”

John Galsworthy

“The Forsyte Saga”

H. G. Wells

“The New Machiavelli”

Hugh Walpole

“The Cathedral”

James Joyce

“Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”

Siegfried Sassoon

“Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man”

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Trends in American Fiction

American novelists have been most successful when they have depicted the contemporary life around them. Since the beginning of the twentieth century a change has taken place in the trend of American literature. It has turned from romanticism to realism and from criticism of American institutions to "research of the soul." This movement was led by Theodore Dreiser, Edgar Lee Masters, Sinclair Lewis, and Willa Cather.

An analysis of American reading based on a survey of "best sellers" reveals:

The popularity at the beginning of the century of romantic novels in the vein of *Graustark*

The appearance of criticism of American life with Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* and Winston Churchill's *Coniston*

A period of "muck-raking"

The growing popularity of "realistic" fiction

By 1919 the sale of nonfiction books increased to the point where they too became "best sellers."

Present-day American reading, based on an analysis of the type of books bought in the largest quantities, shows:

A greater maturity

A tendency toward escape-seeking

The decline of religious authority

Freer sexual attitudes

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A growing spirit of inquiry
A widening of interests
A rise in the level of taste

The following books are picked out from the writings of Americans as valuable aids to background building. They include not only novels but short stories, a form of literature in which Americans are preeminent, and in addition, poetry, autobiography, and essays. The selection shows the development and scope of American writing.

Jonathan Edwards

“Sermons”

Benjamin Franklin

“Autobiography”

Thomas Paine

“Selected Writings”

Washington Irving

“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

James Fenimore Cooper

“The Last of the Mohicans”

Edgar Allan Poe

“Tales and Poetry”

Nathaniel Hawthorne

“The Scarlet Letter”

Herman Melville

“Moby Dick”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Nature Addresses and Lectures

Henry Thoreau

“Walden”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Autocrat of the Breakfast Table”

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Henry Adams

“Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres”

“The Education of Henry Adams”

Walt Whitman

“Leaves of Grass”

Mark Twain

“The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”

Bret Harte

“Short Stories”

Henry James

“The American”

O. Henry

“Short Stories”

William Dean Howells

“Literary Reminiscences”

Upton Sinclair

“The Jungle”

Edwin Arlington Robinson

“Collected Poems”

Edgar Lee Masters

“Spoon River Anthology”

James Branch Cabell

“Jurgén”

Carl Van Vechten

“Peter Whiffle”

Theodore Dreiser

“An American Tragedy”

John Dos Passos

“Manhattan Transfer”

Sinclair Lewis

“Arrowsmith”

“Main Street”

Ernest Hemingway

“A Farewell to Arms”

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Willa Cather

"A Lost Lady"

"Death Comes for the Archbishop"

George Santayana

"The Last Puritan"

Mark Van Doren

"The Oxford Book of American Prose"

The "Best" Books

Among the ingrained diversions of the literati is the habit of compiling lists of "best books." Readers of the periodicals in which such lists appear may well take them with a grain, if not indeed with a whole pillar of salt, for the compilers never seem to answer the important questions . . . best for whom and when? One such list maker who always included the Spanish classic *Don Quixote* explained that he had never read the book but by listing it each year he kept it in his mind and would one day get around to it.

All lists of "best" books reflect the individual preferences of the men and women who compile them. True to form, the following list of "The Ten Best Books," chosen by the late Dr. S. Parkes Cadman for *The New York Herald-Tribune*, indicates a personal penchant for philosophical and devotional literature. Actually, the distinguished clergyman's line-up makes but seven volumes, for he picks three of the list from the Bible. Dr. Cadman's Big Ten are as follows:

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The Book of Job
The Gospel of St. John the Divine
The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans
The Hindu Vedas
The Koran
Homer
Dante
Shakespeare
Milton
Goethe

Although, as he remarks, "a score besides these names clamor for mention," he considers the books he has selected entitled to preeminence. Here are the reasons that guided his choice:

1. The Book of Job, as one of the oldest dramas extant and of its kind the greatest. One does not wonder that Milton and Shelley refrained from dramatizing it because they found the book beyond their powers.

2. The Gospel of St. John, as the supremely religious document of sacred literature.

3. The Epistle to the Romans, not only for its native strength but also for its influence upon many of the makers of Western civilization.

4. The Hindu Vedas, as among the earliest tributes to creative wisdom rendering praise in majestic lyrical forms to the Source of all being.

5. The Koran, which inspires the faith of the most aggressive religion of the Orient and of Africa.

6. Homer, since the poems attributed to him have diffused Greek literature throughout modern civilization.

7. Dante, in whom mediaevalism received its greatest memorial from a completely enfranchised soul.

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8. Shakespeare, whose works need no comment; they speak for themselves.

9. Milton, of whom Wordsworth said that his soul was "like a star and dwelt apart; God's gifted organ voice, whose sound was like the sea."

10. Goethe, who surveyed life with a detached serenity no modern author has excelled.

Dr. Cadman's list, preoccupied though it is with religion and philosophy, contains much imaginative and poetic writing but ignores the vast and popular field we call fiction. He has selected the books that have influenced thought and action. Although many of these writings contain narratives of absorbing interest, this story element is secondary.

That genial critic, William Lyon Phelps, steps into the breach with a selection he calls "Another Hundred Best," in which he picks out from the great welter of novels, old and new, a thoroughly representative company. These are all stories and, although many of them contain philosophy, sociology, history, and even ethical teaching, they hold their own by reason of the excellence of the stories they tell and the effectiveness of the characters they create. Professor Phelps's list is international. In it the great names in French and Russian and German and Scandinavian literature appear side by side with those of the English and American novelists. Some may quibble with

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his selections from contemporary writers, but all will admit that, by and large, Dr. Phelps has picked out a noble company of books. He has arranged them chronologically from his first choice, that of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which was the first newspaper serial story, up to his latest selections from the contemporary novelists. We reprint the selection from *Scribner's Magazine*, in which the list first appeared.

Daniel Defoe

"Robinson Crusoe"

Jonathan Swift

"Gulliver's Travels"

Abbé Antoine Prévost

"Manon Lescaut"

Samuel Richardson

"Pamela"

"Clarissa Harlowe"

Henry Fielding

"Tom Jones"

"Joseph Andrews"

Oliver Goldsmith

"The Vicar of Wakefield"

Tobias Smollett

"Humphrey Clinker"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Wilhelm Meister"

"Elective Affinities"

Jane Austen

"Pride and Prejudice"

"Emma"

"Persuasion"

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Sir Walter Scott

“The Bride of Lammermoor”

“Ivanhoe”

“Quentin Durward”

James Fenimore Cooper

“The Pilot”

“The Last of the Mohicans”

Victor Hugo

“Les Misérables”

“Notre Dame de Paris”

Alexandre Dumas

“The Three Musketeers”

“The Count of Monte Cristo”

“Twenty Years After”

“The Vicomte de Bragelonne”

Honoré de Balzac

“Eugénie Grandet”

“Père Goriot”

Nikolai V. Gogol

“Taras Bulba”

Charles Dickens

“Pickwick Papers”

“Old Curiosity Shop”

“David Copperfield”

“Great Expectations”

“Our Mutual Friend”

Charlotte Brontë

“Jane Eyre”

Emily Brontë

“Wuthering Heights”

William Makepeace Thackeray

“Vanity Fair”

“Henry Esmond”

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Nathaniel Hawthorne

"The Scarlet Letter"

"House of Seven Gables"

Herman Melville

"Moby Dick"

Harriet Beecher Stowe

"Uncle Tom's Cabin"

Gustave Flaubert

"Madame Bovary"

Björnstjerne Björnson

"Synnöve Solbakken"

George Eliot

"Adam Bede"

"The Mill on the Floss"

Ivan S. Turgenev

"A House of Gentlefolk"

"Fathers and Sons"

"On the Eve"

"Smoke"

Charles Reade

"The Cloister and the Hearth"

Feodor M. Dostoievsky

"Memoirs of the House of the Dead"

"Crime and Punishment"

"The Brothers Karamazov"

"The Idiot"

Count Leo N. Tolstoi

"War and Peace"

"Anna Karenina"

"The Death of Ivan Ilyitch"

"Resurrection"

Anthony Trollope

"Barchester Towers"

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George Meredith

“The Ordeal of Richard Feverel”

Lewis Carroll

“Alice in Wonderland”

William Wilkie Collins

“The Moonstone”

Richard D. Blackmore

“Lorna Doone”

Paul Johann von Heyse

“The Children of the World”

Mark Twain

“Tom Sawyer”

“Huckleberry Finn”

Henry James

“The Portrait of a Lady”

“The American”

Thomas Hardy

“The Return of the Native”

“The Woodlanders”

“Tess of the D’Urbervilles”

Anatole France

“The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard”

William D. Howells

“A Modern Instance”

Robert Louis Stevenson

“Treasure Island”

“Kidnapped”

“Weir of Hermiston”

George Bernard Shaw

“Cashel Byron’s Profession”

Guy de Maupassant

“A Life”

Hermann Sudermann

“Dame Care”

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Emile Zola

"The Downfall"

George Moore

"Esther Waters"

Stephen Crane

"The Red Badge of Courage"

James Barrie

"Sentimental Tommy"

Joseph Conrad

"The Nigger of the Narcissus"

Alfred Ollivant

"Bob, Son of Battle"

Rudyard Kipling

"Kim"

Samuel Butler

"The Way of All Flesh"

Jack London

"The Call of the Wild"

W. H. Hudson

"Green Mansions"

William DeMorgan

"Joseph Vance"

Romain Rolland

"Jean Christophe"

Henryk Sienkiewicz

"Pan Michael"

Arnold Bennett

"The Old Wives' Tale"

H. G. Wells

"Tono Bungay"

Knut Hamsun

"Growth of the Soil"

Edith Wharton

"The Age of Innocence"

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John Galsworthy

“The Forsyte Saga”

Thornton Wilder

“The Bridge of San Luis Rey”

Sinclair Lewis

“Dodsworth”

Willa Cather

“Death Comes for the Archbishop”

General Literature

Many books of general literature are quite as fascinating as fiction to read, and many are more rewarding as background material. Under this head we encounter autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, and personal sketches. These illuminating human documents are less guarded than formal history and often more revealing. The writing of biography has been influenced in recent years by such adroit exponents as the late Lytton Strachey and Philip Guedalla. The reading public has quickly appreciated the new sprightliness and interest in this whole field.

Also under the heading of General Literature comes the essay. The essay remains the most distinctly English of all our literary forms in that it has been less subjected to international influence. Whereas the English novel and the English play have felt the force of a Zola, an Ibsen, and a Dostoevsky, the English essay has remained essentially English. There are excellent examples of both

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branches of the essay—the formal and the casual essay. The formal essay often contains the distilled essence of a sagacious mind, as in Bacon's "Essays," while the casual essay runs its gay and diverting way from Lamb to its many modern exemplifiers, such as Max Beerbohm, G. K. Chesterton, Christopher Morley, and A. A. Milne.

The following books of general literature form part of the background of most cultivated men and women:

Lytton Strachey

"Eminent Victorians"

Izaak Walton

"The Compleat Angler"

James Boswell

"The Life of Samuel Johnson"

Samuel Pepys

"Diary"

Burton K. Hendrick

"The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page"

Francis Bacon

"Essays"

Charles Lamb

"Essays of Elia"

George Borrow

"Lavengro"

"The Bible in Spain"

John Bunyan

"Pilgrim's Progress"

James Fraser

"The Golden Bough"

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Philip Guedalla

“Fathers of the Revolution”

“The Second Empire”

Washington Irving

“The Sketch Book”

Robert Louis Stevenson

“Selected Essays”

CHAPTER VII

HOW TO USE THE NEWSPAPER, THE MAGAZINE, AND THE RADIO IN BACKGROUND BUILDING

What the newspaper offers: its range and quality. The magazine and its function. Short cuts in reading newspapers and periodicals. What the radio can contribute.

Among the most popular means of education available to everyone are the newspaper, the magazine, and the radio. The three have in common the virtue of low cost, made possible by their vast circulation and distribution. Likewise, all three have behind them ample resources of capital which makes it possible for them, when they wish, to employ the best available talent that the contemporary world provides. In addition to similarity on these practical counts, the three make their fundamental appeal to the public through the variety of their content and the timeliness of its presentation. To read today's press and to listen to today's radio is to be up to the minute with the last news flash.

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The Newspaper as Educator

The statement that the newspaper is the average man's university needs qualification. The value of the newspaper as an educational force depends entirely on the type of newspaper one reads. Daily journalism falls roughly into two main classes: the papers which make it their chief aim to inform and interpret and the papers which place the emphasis primarily on entertainment. By entertainment we mean not merely comic strips but "features" of one kind or another, serial stories, beauty hints, puzzles, competitions, and the like. The first type of newspaper not only is a good aid to background building, but in some respects it is an indispensable one.

What Do We Get from the Best Newspapers?

Good English. Good newspaper English is good English. Never before has so much care been expended by newspapers on accuracy, correctness of grammar and idiom, readability, and style. Slovenliness, carelessness, and bad taste belong to "journalese," not reputable journalism. The same people who take a superior attitude to the words "newspaper prose" overlook the fact that they call the same prose literature when it is taken from the newspaper and put between the covers of books.

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Current History. To present the news is the newspaper's reason for being. Scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions have so speeded up the processes of news gathering, news transmission, and news distribution that the daily paper can now bring us not only the latest information of our own community and nation, but the latest news from the remotest corners of the earth. The leading newspapers now present the significant news each day with such fullness of detail and such accuracy of documentation that the historians of the future will look to them as the chief sources from which to gain their ideas of our times. Through reading, each day, that day's significant news, we become men and women of the world in the truest sense.

Interpretation of the News. Each issue of a newspaper presents more facts than the average man or woman can normally digest. What we seek is someone to show us what these facts mean. The leading newspapers employ specialists to provide us with this service. Articles that interpret the significant news appear either side by side with it in the paper or in succeeding editions. The men and women who write these articles are trained to pick out the thread of meaning from the tangled skein of events.

Government and Politics. Democratic government depends upon public opinion. Successful democratic government rests upon public opinion

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intelligently informed on the principles and policies of the nation. The early American newspapers gave their greatest space to political news. Often it consisted of little beyond partisan propaganda. Today governmental and political news is treated more ably, more comprehensively, and more fairly than ever before. A tendency of modern journalism is for papers to publish contrary views side by side, together with announcements of their own policy, in order that their public may be completely informed. To read and study this important phase of the news is to follow one of the chief purposes of education—to prepare the individual for citizenship. The leading newspapers perform a valuable public service by printing in full all important governmental speeches, documents, and treaties.

International Relations. Newspapers do not limit their governmental and political news to that emanating from their own capitals. They cover adequately the trends and policies in all the countries of the world. To read such news is to gain an international point of view. It is a preliminary step to understanding the complex contemporary civilization of which each nation forms a part.

Science and Invention. When Lord Tennyson wrote of the "fairy tales of science" he did not dream that they would become a regular feature of the daily newspapers. Today the modern editor gives more space to scientific news, the announce-

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ment of new discoveries, new theories, and new inventions in all the varied fields than his predecessors gave to the once dominant subject of politics. Scientific news in the daily press makes good reading. Expert writers, who are also students of science, present the latest findings of the scientists in simple straightforward English which eliminates the highly specialized professional vocabulary. In addition to the news of science, the newspaper publishes many articles of exposition and opinion from the pens of the leading men of science all over the world.

The Professions and Business. From the newspaper we gain insight into the happenings and developments in our own profession or business. Equally important, we learn from them the contributions to the common good of other professions and callings. We learn, for instance, of new laws. The newspaper interprets each new statute for us and indicates how it will affect us. The newspaper keeps us informed of the progress of the medical profession in its fight against disease. It expounds for us each new theory and discovery. It prints the comments of the leading physicians and surgeons. It keeps us abreast of modern advertising; it follows the ups and downs of real estate; it keeps tab on the automobile factories and the other great manufacturing industries of the country. By reading the newspaper's survey of business and profes-

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sional activity, one keeps one's finger on the pulse of the world.

Economics. Related to the news of the professions and business is the news of economics. This subject in the newspaper covers a wide field. It ranges from the latest information of the money markets of the world to the place of women in industry. It includes labor problems, the question of unemployment, and the right and wrong of strikes. The newspaper supplies the only comprehensive background available in contemporary economics.

Philosophy and Religion. The newspaper reflects the doubts and speculations of present-day philosophy by printing in speeches and articles the conclusions of the world's thinkers. Such names as John Dewey, George Santayana, and George Bernard Shaw are news. What such men say and write is news. The widespread interest in religion can be gauged by the amount of space given throughout the country to the news of the religious denominations. Such topics as the growing trend toward church union, the new status of the missionary movement, the place of the Church in education occur and reoccur in the daily press. Outstanding clergymen like the late Dr. S. Parkes Cadman and Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick use the newspaper and the radio as well as the pulpit. The Monday morning issues of daily papers present a symposium page of the many topics that the

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clergymen of all denominations have discussed on the preceeding day.

Psychology and Sociology. The student of psychology finds in each day's paper a veritable case-book for interesting and exciting study. In it one can find at a glance illustrations of normal, abnormal, and subnormal behavior. According to Stanley Walker, the paper frequently concerns itself with "women, wampum and wrongdoing." The study of crime makes an important and useful field for the psychologist. Dealing with it, the newspaper considers such subjects as psychological aids in crime detection, and hopefully prints articles on psychology's contribution to crime prevention. As a matter of record, the press of the country keeps abreast of all important developments in this important science.

Education. Even a casual survey of the space given to education in all its branches indicates the newspaper's assurance of the universal interest in this subject. News of the schools and colleges, their equipment, their personnel, and their programs fills many columns daily, and frequently takes up whole sections of the Sunday issues. New departures in education, experiments in child training, the growing interest in adult education—all such topics get into the headlines.

Health and Deportment. The newspaper deliberately turns professor in expounding, through specialized departments, information on health,

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diet, and etiquette. Even a small country weekly will subscribe to a syndicated outpouring on one or another of these topics. When written by specialists such columns have a definite educational value but the student who would learn from them must pick his mentor. Do not waste good time on what seems to you merely trivial chit-chat.

Biography. We learn from our fellow men—from the story of their lives, their experiences, their successes, and failures. No part of journalistic writing has shown so great an improvement in recent years as the writing of biographical matter in personal sketches and obituaries. It has improved because public interest in biography demands such improvement. Actually, it is difficult to make uninteresting anything that concerns a life. The present-day trend is to make this essential interest even more compelling. The art of biography has passed in our own time through three phases. The old chronological approach, which began with a man's ancestors and followed his life from the cradle to the grave, lost its popularity with the advent of Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*. His less artistic followers then created the "debunking school" of personal memoir and biography. This technique had wide popularity but is now outmoded. The current method is more interpretative and more selective than the two preceding ones. It uses many of the devices of fiction in establishing

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and re-creating the atmosphere in which its subject lived. It strives to present the actual man, not in effigy, but in action, "in his habit as he lived." Through its biographical writing the newspaper brings us in intimate touch with the great figures of the contemporary world.

Books. The daily and weekly press performs a unique service in its attempt to keep pace with the flood of published books. The newspaper regards books as important news. The leading papers employ special literary reporters to tell the public the news of a new book: who wrote it, what it contains, and how it is written. Smaller papers subscribe to syndicated columns which present much the same information. The value of such reviewing is in direct proportion to the ability and critical talents of the reviewers employed. The wise reader discovers for himself the critic whose judgment he regards as sound. Some of these articles are in themselves excellent reading and exhibit style, literary background, the salt of wit and humor, and the ability to turn a neat epigram. The reading of all such writing enables one to form one's own standards of criticism. In addition, it introduces one to the vast range of contemporary publications. One week's issue of the book-review section of a metropolitan newspaper contains articles on such background-building material as the new architecture, the changes in the opera, the causes

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of war, new methods of crime prevention, and critical appraisals of Baudelaire, Karl Marx, and Thomas Wolfe, in addition to reviews of current fiction, biography, travel books, and general subjects.

The Arts. Art remains primarily the privilege of the great population centers of the world which can support the opera, the concert, and the theater and maintain famous galleries and museums. Fortunately its appreciation knows no such limitations. The understanding and enjoyment of the various arts contribute immeasurably to life's fullness and are essentials in culture. The metropolitan press devotes much space and employs specialists who expend much skill in giving to the public the news of all the arts. If we list some of the chief art forms under separate headings, we can see at a glance the comprehensiveness of the newspaper treatment and its value to the background builder.

Architecture. From earliest days, architecture has stood out as one of the most important of all the arts. Today the term implies not merely design and decoration but a whole field of engineering. It provides the buildings in which we live, do business, and find recreation. It strives to make our surroundings more beautiful, more practical, and more comfortable. The news of architecture includes the latest development in housing schemes all over the world; plans, descriptions, and photographs of

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new or projected public buildings; and much background information on the great architectural periods and their contribution to the architecture of the present day. Through reading the news of architecture we find an answer to such questions as: Is the skyscraper era over? What is functional architecture? What can we learn from the English housing systems? In what phases has Scandinavian architecture taken the lead?

Music. While the radio, the screen, and the concert bring us music at first hand, the newspaper enables us to understand and to appreciate more fully the music we hear. Competent critics discuss the interpretation of the conductors, their orchestras, and the assisting virtuosos. They place the work of new composers in its relation to the art as a whole. They point out what is worth while in modern music and why. They guide us in our selection of recorded music.

Painting and Sculpture. Through rotogravure, color photography, and other processes, the daily and Sunday newspapers enable us to see reproductions of many of the world's great masterpieces of painting and sculpture. When a Rembrandt painting or a Rodin statue becomes the property of the public in one of the great municipal museums, the newspaper considers it news so important that not only illustrations but columns of descriptive and interpretative matter chronicle the event. When

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a masterpiece changes hands, when a Rubens or a Velasquez or an El Greco or a Goya goes to the auction rooms, that too is news. Similarly, with illustration and comment, the daily and Sunday press keeps us posted on the new developments in mural and portrait painting and in sculpture. It indicates the new trends and fashions in the various "schools."

The Theater. Journalism has always considered the drama and the life of the stage as "copy." It has assigned and still assigns to this department its ablest talent. Names such as Eugene Field, William Winter, A. B. Walkeley, William Archer, George Bernard Shaw, St. John Irvine, Stark Young, Joseph Wood Krutch, Brooks Atkinson, and Alexander Woolcott appear in the long list of able men who wrote and write about the theater in the daily press. For centuries the theater has been a potent force in cultural development. We gain insight into it as a business and as an art; we increase our background in contemporary drama and in our knowledge of the stage's history and personnel; we encounter the ideas that the playwrights express upon the stage, by following the newspaper as it surveys and reports on each theatrical season.

The Motion Picture. The newspaper was quick to note the improvement of the cinema as an art form and its growth in importance in public entertainment and education. It responded to this

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improvement in the movies by raising the standards of criticism and by selecting as critics men and woman competent to guide and inform the public, and on occasion to instruct Hollywood.

Editorials. From the vantage point of its editorial offices, the newspaper watches this vast parade of human activity, human endeavor, and human achievement. It selects what it deems most significant, and in its editorials it endeavors to explain and to interpret. Editorial writing in its finer phases is itself an art. The best editorials in their cogency of thought and in their succinctness of phrase make excellent models of contemporary style. They are the medium through which each paper indicates its personality. If we follow each day the editorials of a great newspaper, we have a front-row seat at the spectacle of life, side by side with one who will point out what we should not miss and explain to us the meaning of the shifting scenes.

The Magazine and Its Function

The weekly and monthly magazines supplement and in many ways go farther than the daily newspaper. These periodical publications come to us under several general heads:

The all-fiction magazines

The popular magazines

The "quality" group

The magazines of criticism and opinion

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The news magazines
The digest magazines
The special-interest magazines
The technical and trade magazines

With a few notable exceptions, the all-fiction group is made up of the cheaper publications known as the "pulp." The "popular" magazines are those of vast national circulation presenting both fiction and general articles. They include weeklies like *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, monthlies such as *Cosmopolitan*, and women's magazines like *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, and *The Woman's Home Companion*. While still "popular" in the general sense, the "quality group" appeals to readers of more mature and cultivated taste. It includes *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *Scribner's*. The magazines of criticism and opinion seldom print fiction. They limit their content to reviews and opinions. This group includes *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *Forum*, and *The Commonweal*. The news magazines are weeklies in the manner of *Time*. The digest magazines are growing in popularity. They include *The Literary Digest*, which presents quoted comment on the chief sides of main issues, *The Reader's Digest*, which reprints articles abridged from other magazines, and *The Fiction Parade*, which reprints short stories in full.

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Members of the special-interest group devote themselves to their special subjects. They include *Stage*, and *Theatre Arts Monthly*, which deal with the drama; *The Studio*, which follows the graphic arts; *Etude*, which concerns itself with music; *House and Garden*, *Arts and Decoration*, and the like. The technical and trade magazines are what their name implies. Each profession, business, and trade has now its own publications, in some instances a dozen or more.

A distinct feature of present-day magazine editorial policy is to give ever increasing space to articles of opinion. This trend began with the overnight success of H. L. Mencken and *The American Mercury*, which made articles of opinion its chief staple. Demand in this instance preceded supply. Editors, however, soon awoke to the desire of the public to be guided by expert and often scholarly opinion. That desire continues and grows as our national and international life develops daily in new complexities.

The writers who contribute to the daily papers write to the tick of the clock. Their writing reflects this energy and speed in its pace and briskness and in its swift pointing of a phrase hammered out at white heat. Many of the same writers contribute to the magazines. The magazine article differs from the newspaper article, not so much in its background and its subject matter, as in its more

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leisurely method of presentation and, accordingly, in its greater comprehensiveness. Its style, while at times not so pointed, gains instead an extra polish.

The leading magazines employ the leading writers. Fiction, biographies, and general literature appear in the magazines before appearing in book form. By keeping up with the magazines, one keeps a step in advance of the new books.

By reading the best fiction in the magazines we increase our background by familiarizing ourselves with the work of the leading contemporary storytellers. These writers quickly transfer to the printed page their fiction comment on the changing manners and morals of the contemporary scene.

By reading the general articles, particularly those of opinion, we receive valuable help in forming our own judgment.

By reading the magazines devoted to special interests we get authoritative information on and interpretation of the arts, industries, and "movements" that inspire these publications.

Experts have from time to time devised methods to enable the reader to read more rapidly. The best schemes demonstrate the inside workings of the writing technique so that by understanding the basic design the reader can skip the least valuable part of the writing. We adopt this method with newspaper and magazine reading.

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One can read the daily newspaper with intelligence and with profit, or one can just read it. In the first instance, one takes away definite information because that information has been sought out and found. In the second instance one puts down the rumpled sheets with the blurred belief that everyone besides oneself is on a holiday and being photographed in bathing suits; that something is the matter with someone's baby; that the men and women who make up Society with a capital S are all being divorced or deserve to be; that food for some unexplained reason tastes better if chopped in little bits and cooked in a casserole.

The man or woman who reads the paper with intelligence reads to a plan. The man who gets little out of the paper except befuddlement is a catch-as-catch-can reader who takes in all that his eye lights on from "Beauty Chats to Girls" to the closing prices on the Stock Exchange.

It has been estimated that the average man spends thirty minutes each day with his paper. If he spends that time intelligently, he will gain a fair knowledge of what has just gone on in his world and in his community and what opinions men hold about such goings on. He will note new developments in his own profession or business; he will keep up with events in his own hobby or sport. He will mark and put aside for more leisurely perusal

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articles on science, invention, architecture, education, social betterment, or national and international politics. How should one organize this thirty minutes of reading time to get the best out of the daily paper?

1. Get a comprehensive notion of the contents for the day. Many papers now print a daily index. If this is available, sort the contents and list them mentally according to your interests. If there is no index, take a deliberate survey of the whole issue. If the paper is one with which the reader is familiar, this survey need take but a few minutes. The reader knows from habit the format and make-up. He knows where to find its editorials, its sport news and comment, its shipping intelligence, its financial section.

This preliminary glance will show: the front page, which lists the main news stories of the day; the inside pages with their lesser local news; the topics on which the editors have chosen to comment; the amount of space given to the specialized news of the reader's own business or profession, legal, medical, clerical, educational, financial, etc. Allowing for "time out," in which to glance at some particularly interesting picture, chart, or other item as one turns, this preliminary checking up of contents need take no more than three minutes. If the newspaper provides an index, its use cuts the survey time in half.

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Although condensed to the minimum, the index of the daily edition of *The New York Times* runs to a full column. Its organization of material lists the paper's departmental news first:

	Page		Page
Army orders.....	44	Radio.....	31
Art.....	19-23	Real estate.....	42
Books.....	19	Screen.....	24-25
Business.....	31-32	Shipping, mails.....	45
Buyers.....	32	Society.....	26
Editorial.....	20	Sports.....	27
Financial.....	33	Theaters.....	24-25
Music.....	24-25	Weather.....	45
Obituaries.....	21	Wills, estates.....	44

The *Times* follows this line-up with a detailed listing of the various angles to the day's chief story, be it a strike, a hurricane, a world war, or an election campaign. After that it presents its news contents under the following subheads: New York, Metropolitan Area, Albany, Washington, General, Foreign, Financial and Business, Sports, Advertisements.

2. After noting the contents, either by personal survey or by using the index, turn to the main news of the day. To present news remains the newspaper's chief function. The best papers today present the news more rapidly, more fully, and more accurately than ever before in the history of the world. They expend more care in its gathering, in its writing, in its editing, and in its presentation.

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The intelligent man or woman gets from even a rapid reading of a reputable newspaper a knowledge of the latest important happenings in his community, state or province, and nation, as well as in the world at large. At least twelve minutes of the half-hour which the average person spends with the paper should go into reading the day's chief news.

How to Read News Quickly

To cover the chief news quickly, one need not read all that the paper chooses to print on each event. A knowledge of the newspaper's specialized technique of presentation will serve as an aid to rapid reading. Newspaper convention insists that the newspaper writer tell the reader all the chief facts in the first paragraph; that he tell the next important details in the second and so on to the end, with each paragraph diminishing in news importance. As the headline's purpose is first to call attention to the story by announcing briefly its subject and climax, the reader will gain all the essential information by reading the headline and first paragraph of the story as printed. The initial paragraph will answer his inevitable questions: Who? What? When? Where? and usually How?

Keep in mind that the news story in graphic outline resembles an inverted pyramid with its broad base the beginning of the story and its apex

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the relatively unimportant last paragraph. If the news, beyond the swift announcement of the main facts, holds an especial interest for you, read down a paragraph or two. Such paragraphs merely amplify the main fact with fuller detail.

How to Read Editorials

3. Having read the important news, turn to the editorial page to find the paper's interpretation of the news and its opinions on it, which it expresses in its editorials. On this page the newspaper, unless it has succumbed to the syndicated editorial, has a soul and calls that soul its own.

In metropolitan papers the editorials are written by experts on the subjects concerned. On smaller papers, where one man writes them all and must try, like Bacon, to take "all knowledge for his province," they may be less informed, but they have the value of giving the "home town" attitude. They indicate how the event chosen for comment affects the particular community and the residents of that community. In cases where the small-town editor is a man possessed of sound opinions and a vigorous style in expressing them, he attracts readers far beyond his town limits. William Allen White, editor of *The Emporia Gazette*, has readers in all parts of the United States.

Editorials are written with care and deserve careful reading. If they must be glanced at quickly

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to ascertain their main contribution to the reader's daily understanding, a knowledge of the technique they follow will help.

Editorials for the most part fall by custom into timely essays of three units. The first unit, usually the opening paragraph, is the news unit, which states the happening that has inspired the editorial. The second is the opinion unit. This presents the opinions and thoughts that the news unit has stimulated, together with illustrations and anecdotes to reinforce those thoughts. The third and final part is the deliberative unit. This gives reasons or authorities for the train of thought set in motion and for the conclusions reached, which the writer wishes the reader to accept.

Readers who are familiar with this specialized technique and who have only a brief time to spend with the paper will select the parts of the editorial they especially wish to read. As they already know the news, they may eliminate the news unit. They will carefully read the opinion unit, and, if they agree with the opinion, may go on to the deliberative unit to substantiate their own judgment. If they disagree, they may go to the deliberative unit to see what authorities they must confound. Ten minutes of the average man's half hour may well go into editorial reading. On the editorial page one usually finds the cartoon, which, if it has more than an entertainment purpose, exists as a graphic

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editorial. In the hands of able draftsmen, the cartoon can express opinion quickly, effectively, memorably. Here also one finds the "Letters to the Editor" and the editorial quotations culled from other papers. They merit at least five minutes of the now rapidly diminishing thirty.

4. The reader turns to his special interest. He has read the main news and the main comment. He now feels free to turn to that particular department in which his chief interest lies. It may be the sporting page; it may be along the lines of his profession or business; it may be the book column, the society column, the obituary column, or those sections which deal with the theater, the motion picture, or radio. He has a wide variety from which to choose. If he spends the remaining minutes of the allotted half hour on his own elective reading, he can do so with a clear conscience. He has taken the main portions of the newspaper's bill of fare in logical order. We shall leave him free to choose his dessert.

Reading the Sunday Paper

The American Sunday paper, which started out as a dime museum, has achieved in its most representative form the status of a great popular University. It covers, as no other single publication in the world does, the day's events; the summary of the previous week's events, and editorial opinion

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on the same. It keeps pace in its book section, as few specialized literary reviews can, with the growing tide of publications. Similarly, it keeps up with amusements, sport, fashion, and the arts. In its magazine sections it prints fiction and articles by outstanding writers on science, education, politics, and world affairs. To mark and digest adequately the significant features of the Sunday edition of a great American daily would take not merely the whole of the week-end, but the whole of the week.

The Sunday paper's chief drawback is its unwieldiness. It strives to mitigate this defect by dividing itself into sections, each of which, if taken separately, can be easily handled. Much excellent contemporary writing, before it reaches book form, appears in the Sunday paper. It is not writing that today is, and tomorrow is cast into the waste-paper basket. Much of it deserves to be marked or torn out, placed to one side, and read carefully when the reader has sufficient time. Many of these articles, reviews, editorials, and "features" make a definite contribution to one's cultural background. The painstaking student will clip and file this material for future reference and use. In cases where the Sunday paper prints a separate magazine section and a separate book section, such sections can be kept to slip into the pocket for reading on trains or subways during the week ahead.

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Reading the Magazine Article

The articles in these newspaper sections resemble so closely the writing in the weekly and monthly magazines that we can group them together.

The vast percentage of magazine articles have as the main purpose the desire to inform, to make clear, to teach. Occasionally, when definitely opinionated, such writing aims to persuade. But, by and large, it seeks primarily to instruct the reader. We call this whole class of writing *expository writing* or *exposition*. It shows; it explains.

The writer of such expository material does his hardest work before he sets pen to paper or finger to typewriter keyboard. This work consists of a careful preliminary outline. Exposition more than any other form of writing demands the groundwork of an exact plan. If the article tells of a new idea, it develops that idea from its initial thought germ through each phase of its growth in succession to the final complete form. If it discusses a new process—How to Do This or That; How This or That Is Done—it presents that method step by step much as a mason builds a stone wall, first laying the foundation and then placing stone on stone until the final one fits into its niche. The writer of such an article shows the relative importance of each step by the amount of space he gives to it.

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The writing of exposition follows this initial plan. The writer announces each successive step by what we know as a "topic sentence." He then proceeds to develop this announced idea by further explanation, by illustration, and by anecdote. At the end, after he has explained the last step or conclusion, he usually sums up in a final paragraph.

Adequately to evaluate an article one must read the whole thing thoroughly and mark each step. A knowledge of the technique it follows enables us to read it quickly if shortage of time so dictates. We know that we can get the gist of it by reading:

The first paragraph
Each topic sentence in succession
The final summing up

This method saves time when time has to be saved, but by it we get merely a bird's-eye view. We run the risk of missing something of value. Next to outlining the initial plan, the author's chief difficulty with exposition lies in the securing of the best illustrations. He often delays writing the article until these have been found. As a rule, the illustrations and anecdotes show this care in selection and may well be studied. You may find them useful too. If they strike you as particularly apt, you might well copy them in a notebook or clip and file them. You may possibly find them an

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asset in that after-dinner talk or in that speech before the club. Also, as "borrowed plumes" they may brighten up your conversation.

Marking and Clipping

This practice of marking and clipping anecdotes, concisely worded information, and bright and pertinent comments for future use is admirable only if done in a systematic way. Too many pigeon-holes and desk drawers hold crumpled bits torn out of magazines and newspapers which do little more than collect dust. It takes only a few minutes to cut out carefully the column or paragraph from the daily or Sunday newspaper or magazine and place it in a regular filing folder which your stationer can supply for a few cents. You may file under three or more different headings. If you take an active part in club affairs, one such heading may be "Speech Illustrations," and into the folder bearing it will go clippings that have to do with the subjects on which you usually talk in public or would like to talk in the future. Another folder will have the label "Hobbies," or perhaps a special hobby such as "Gardening." Haphazard and disorganized clipping has little value; systematic filing has long proved its worth. The best method is to mark the significant paragraph or article as you read and then clip when you have finished.

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Getting the Best from the Radio

The radio, if we make intelligent use of it, will give valuable aid to us in building background. The majority of listeners use the radio merely as a pastime, as an entertainment. As a result they get from it haphazard information, popular tunes, banal platitudes, some good jokes, "Mighty Lak' a Rose," bedtime stories, and Miss Somebody or Other's talks to housewives. They hear of the soaps that movie stars prefer, of hairwashes and shampoos, and of body-building foods for infants. The net result of such radio listening is befuddlement. Such listening overlooks the brain-building food for adults which a planned and enlightened turning of the dials provides. Each year marks an increase in worth-while programs of a definite educational value, which are provided not only by the great broadcasting companies themselves but by many commercial sponsors.

What type of instruction can we hope for over the air and what subjects can we tune in on as part of our air curriculum? Here are some outstanding ones:

1. *Music.* Music, the most universal of all the arts, is the common language. No matter from what race the composer or the performer springs, he talks to us through the musical scale in a language that we all understand. The radio brings the best

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music of all time, as well as the worst, to every far-flung hamlet. By consulting the radio programs printed in the daily press, we can find out when the great orchestras, the great vocal or instrumental soloists, and even such great opera companies as that of the Metropolitan Opera of New York can be heard in our living rooms. The broadcasting of the best music has been up to the present time radio's greatest contribution to the cultural life of the world. Along with our chance to get acquainted with great music by hearing it, radio gives us the chance to understand it. On many programs expert commentators talk to us of the history and development of music in its various branches. Walter Damrosch was a pioneer in this field of musical enlightenment over the air. His success has inspired others. If we learn the basic patterns of the symphony, for instance, not only are we enabled to understand more clearly the composer's meaning when we hear the next symphony over the air, but, because our understanding has been widened, our enjoyment of it increases. Similarly with chamber music and the opera. Often such commentators give us insight into the lives and personalities of the composers and great musical virtuosos. In any case we have their biographies available in all standard libraries. A knowledge of these artists, their struggles, their ambitions, and their attainments will aid us more fully to appreciate the great

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music they left behind them as their legacy to the world.

2. *Drama.* In former days, the possession of the opera, the concert hall, and the theater distinguished the metropolitan centers from the "provinces." Today the radio brings this great cultural triumvirate to Labrador or to Little America. The air waves know no "provinces." For centuries the drama, though often cheapened and debased, has ranked as one of the great humanizing institutions of the race. Great drama never loses its appeal or its vitality. The Greek tragedies which moved the Athenian crowds move us still; the pulsing Shakespearian meters which sounded first in the ears of the Elizabethans sound in ours with all their old majesty; the wit of Molière and the wisdom of Goethe overleap the barriers of time and language.

Radio now brings us the theater in all except its visual aspect. That very lack has a forming influence on us for it puts on our imaginations the agreeable task of supplying costumes, scenery, and lighting. Through the radio we can keep abreast of the contemporary stage and hear the outstanding contemporary players. Each week, one can almost say each day, a radio version of some play that has delighted urban theatergoers on Broadway or Shaftesbury Avenue comes over the air to us. Such versions usually last for an hour. They are con-

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densed but not seriously. For one thing the radio saves the time normally spent between the acts when the stage is being set. It eliminates the minor scenes but presents the plays amply and well. Commercial sponsors secure the services of outstanding interpreters. By following contemporary drama on the air, we not only get the theater's comments on our times, but we have the chance to model our pronunciation and accent on actors who are experts in the spoken word. In addition to the opportunity to follow present-day drama, the radio gives us classic drama more frequently than the regular stage, for over the air the greatest production costs are eliminated. One season gave us, for instance, a cycle of Shakespeare's historical plays, some of which had not been acted in decades. This cycle was an educational presentation of the National Broadcasting Company and the company provided on request study sheets to accompany each play.

3. *Current Events.* Presentation of the news of the day accompanied by editorial comment has ranked as a popular radio feature from the days of radio's infancy. Such a program gives the listener a broad understanding of the contemporary world of affairs. As all commentators are human, they have the human failing of tinging their comments with their own bias, their own prejudices, and their own enthusiasms. Listeners gravitate, of course, to those

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commentators whose ideas coincide most closely with their own, be they conservative or radical. The student eager for a comprehensive understanding will listen to all sides. When events of great significance occur, specialists come to the microphone to explain their nature and importance. We must regard current events as history in the making and develop for our better understanding of them a knowledge of that history which has already been made. Thanks to James Harvey Robinson, the author of *The Mind in the Making*, *The Humanization of Knowledge*, and *The Ordeal of Civilization*, a more valuable concept of history is now abroad in the land. He and scholars like him have humanized it and given it a broader base. We look now at history as more than a record of happenings. We have concern with how these happenings came about. The past no longer enslaves but comes to help in our liberation.

4. *Health.* The radio now provides excellent comment on health, both physical and mental. Among the most useful and informing programs on the air are those sponsored by the American Medical Association.

Each season finds the great radio corporations giving more and more attention to the educational aspects of the programs. For this we have largely to thank the energy of Hendrik Willem van Loon, the author of such valuable background-building

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books as *The Story of Mankind* and *Geography*. In 1932 Mr. van Loon organized the first University of the Air. He conducted the courses in history and rounded up associates to tackle such subjects as philosophy, psychology, music, literature, and politics. The author of this book had the honor and pleasure of conducting the first air course in journalism during this initial experiment.

This use of radio as the means by which important additions to one's cultural background can be made opens up the question of the relative value of the eye and the ear in education. The printed word will ever be basic in education. The ear will never say to the eye, "I have no need of thee." There is a saying as old as Herodotus that the ear is a less trustworthy witness than the eye; yet there is a statement from the time of Horace that what the ear communicates to the mind impresses it more than that which is seen by the "unmistaking eyes." The ear has from antiquity been the road to the heart. As students of information by air, we have to develop our capacity to listen. Each year this capacity will be further rewarded. The radio will in time bring the best within the hearing of the ear, supplementing but not supplanting that which comes through the printed word to the eye.

Radio increases yearly in importance as a cultural force. The latest analysis made by the National Broadcasting Company of its activities shows that

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educational programs occupy 24.4 per cent of the time on the air and that "cultural and development programs" take up 25.1 per cent of this time. Dividing the honors between music and the spoken word, the analysis states that music accounted for 63.3 per cent of the total and the spoken word for 36.7 per cent.

Commenting on these statistics with reference to the major importance of music, *The New York Times* says:

Music for its own sake, as in the symphony concerts and the distinguished soloists of voice and instrument; music for dancing; music as *hors d'oeuvre* and dessert for educational programs—it is a role for music in life which the ancient Greek educators would have much admired.

The Columbia Broadcasting System was the first network to sponsor a program of education directly supplementary to the work in the schools. This system considers the educational side of its service so important that it is guided in its program direction by a national committee of thirty-three distinguished educators and has an advisory board of thirty-two well-known teachers.

William S. Paley, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, in his publication, *Radio as a Cultural Force*, indicates his system's policy in education:

To radio's democratic audience, history must be made to seem, not a recitation of facts and dates, but rather a

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spyglass into the past where characters live again. Science must be discussed, not as a series of abstract phenomena, but as an answer to the daily needs of man in his struggle with his environment. Classic literature must become a living expression of today's thought in yesterday's imagery. Geography can be no mere description, but rather an actual experience of the world. Every listener must be made so aware of the direct application of this material to his own life that he listens as avidly as to sheer entertainment.

Listeners privileged to tune in on the British Broadcasting Company, a system officially sponsored and without commercial advertising, have an unusually wide range of background-building material from which to draw. The United Kingdom regards "the wireless" primarily as a public service, and that aim dictates the content of the programs that its experts prepare.

To make the best use of the opportunity of radio, secure each week in advance from the Sunday issues of the metropolitan press or from special radio publications the programs of the week ahead. Go through them; comb and mark them. Record your selections in a notebook, listing the offerings under headings like the few we have just suggested. Then make out your time schedule so that, when you are free to listen, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you listen to good purpose.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE THEATER AND THE FILMS DEVELOP BACKGROUND

What moving pictures offer. The classics on the screen. Biography and history. Music. Good taste in *décor*. The theater's aids to background. The reading of plays.

It may seem a startling and frivolous notion that anything so entertaining as going to the theater or to the moving pictures may be helpful in our search for background. But it is perfectly true that intelligent and discriminating theater-going may yield distinctly worth-while results.

Let us begin with a consideration of the motion pictures and of exactly how they can aid us. Even with the new lease on life the legitimate theater has taken during the past few years, its activities are confined to a few centers. To most of us, the films are a much more common, available commodity.

For years the movies were the much abused and sneered-at stepchild of the arts. Slapstick, heavily sentimental melodrama, and endless displays of tasteless opulence and inane prettiness were considered the movies' contributions to an eager and

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uncritical public. People of background and nice perceptions were not supposed to have anything to do with them.

Lately that legend has been more or less dispelled. Discriminating and intelligent members of society are admitting openly that they find in films much to divert and stimulate them. Certainly since the advent of sound the movies have raised their standards to an appreciable extent.

But there is still a great amount of rubbish and unpalatable nonsense unreeling across the screen, a great deal that is tedious, immature, and useless. So it is essential, particularly when we go to the movies, to get something of value from them, to know exactly what it is the movies can give us, where to look for it, how to reject the spurious and select the useful.

The Classics on the Screen

If we know what we are going to the movies to find and if we watch for it carefully and learn to evaluate, the movies can be a definite help in the acquisition of background.

One of the most important things the movies can do for us is to introduce us to many of what are popularly termed the "classics." Sooner or later practically every well-known and admired work of fiction finds its way to the screen, sometimes, to be sure, in a garbled form. On such occasions the

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public devoted to the work in question is apt to set up a loud clamor of protest. By it we are warned not to expect much from the film version.

In most cases, however, the Hollywood producers have a sufficient respect for this knowing public and they go to considerable lengths to avoid distortions.

It is perfectly clear that any fairly regular moviegoer has developed at least a bowing acquaintance with a long list of venerable works of literature ranging from *Little Women* through *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities* to *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection*, which you may be more apt to recognize under its cinema alias of *We Live Again*, and *Camille*. The plots of these classics have become familiar to a whole army of cinema fans who may never have had the opportunity to read them and who may have known them only as vague titles.

Even in cases where, for one reason or another, certain compressions and alterations were made in the structure and course of the plot, the general atmosphere and period of the book were more or less accurately given. For instance, in the case of *Anna Karenina*, where quite serious liberties were taken with the plot and whole characters and episodes were ruthlessly suppressed, the film's audience did receive a clear notion of the book's essence and chief problem.

They were told the story of a Russian noblewoman who fell in love and was destroyed through

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the inexorable workings of the tradition and conventions her passion had led her to ignore. They saw the genteel corruptions, the heavy, soulless grandeur, the devious but sharply defined operations of the decadent moral system of the Russian aristocracy during the last years of the nineteenth century. The story and the background retained the essentials of Tolstoi's original conception.

To those who saw the film, *Anna Karenina* was no longer a barely pronounceable Russian name. She was a woman, lovely, fascinating, weak, and deeply pitiable. In the sensitive embodiment given her by Greta Garbo, Anna lived and breathed and laughed and wept—and in some ways more vitally, more humanly than on the pages of the book.

No one who saw *Les Misérables* on the screen will ever wonder exactly what sort of people were Jean Valjean, Javert, Cosette, and the rest. Through the film *David Copperfield*, millions became acquainted with Mr. Dick, Peggotty, Dora, Steerforth, and Aunt Betsy. To the vast movie audience, Sydney Carton is no longer simply a quixotic gentleman who, for some reason or other, stuck out his chest and remarked, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, etc." They know who the lovable, dissolute, brilliant Carton was, how he happened to be beheaded, and what motivated his magnificent sacrifice. In summary, they followed the tortuous, romantic story that Dickens unfolds in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

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All these examples are books of considerable bulk and length. Not one of them is a volume that can be read at a single sitting, no matter how protracted. Yet every person of background should be reasonably familiar with their characters and incidents. Seeing the motion-picture version of one of these classics may not afford the same return as reading the book, but it is at least a step in the right direction.

Biography and History on the Screen

Proceeding with a little more caution and with a confidence somewhat impaired by past experience, we come now to the fields of biography and history. At the outset, let it be said there have been few, if any, films that have been strictly accurate in either of these branches. Watching a historical or biographical film is scarcely an acceptable substitute for reading a carefully documented non-fiction work covering the same period or person.

However, while the Hollywood and other producers usually evince a prodigious carelessness for the authenticity of the historical or biographical material they are translating into terms of scenario and close-up, their respect for the physical detail of a period is almost fanatic.

Thus the movies may offer, as they did in *Rasputin*, a czarina who behaved as the real czarina never did, but who wore photographic duplicates

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of the martyred ruler's wardrobe and who moved through settings that were scrupulously copied from the royal apartments in the St. Petersburg palace.

Henry the VIII portrayed a highly stylized, comic account of the fabulous Hal's emotional adventures. As a serious scholarly account of the English king's reign, it was, of course, a charming absurdity. But at the same time, those who saw it were shown the costumes and customs, the sports, the libraries, the dining halls of Tudor England. The physical scene was pictured for them more sharply than could be done by a hundred high-minded history books.

The pictures, in short, ranging from the George Arliss biographical studies to the calm, cool excitements of *The Life of Louis Pasteur* and the authentic pathos of *Rembrandt*, have a hundred different methods of dealing with historic episodes and characters. See them for what they are worth—no more, no less—but always be conscious that the background and the trappings that parade so colorfully before your eyes are likely to be authentic and accurate.

Contemporary Art on the Screen

Moving pictures can bring us within range of the classics and show us at least what historical characters looked like and against what sort of

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backgrounds they moved. In addition, they have another and more immediate value in the development of background. They bring us what is new and fresh, as well as that which is time honored—the stuff of today as well as that of the library shelf.

In the first place, scenario writers and film producers are so acutely aware of the demand for novelty and timeliness that today's headline is apt to be tomorrow's film.

Scarcely had Dillinger gone down to his ultimate defeat, when a movie entitled "G-Men" flashed across the nation's screens, offering not only a flamboyant, shooting-gallery melodrama but a clear and highly praiseworthy visualization of the recruiting and training of the most picturesque and publicized branch of the forces of law and order. Any movie-goer can furnish you with a dozen other examples of how the morning's breakfast-table topic of discussion became that evening's celluloid entertainment.

Plays and novels are turned into films with astonishing rapidity. Burgess Meredith's performance in *Winterset* was a high light of a recent season on Broadway. Within a few months that same performance was on view in a hundred thousand Broadways throughout the land. *The Petrified Forest* was the dramatic wonder child of its season, owing chiefly to the literate eloquence of its author,

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Robert Sherwood, and the sensitive acting of its star, Leslie Howard. *The Petrified Forest* became a film as soon as the play's run was over, and as a result a public more than a hundred times as vast enjoyed Sherwood's supple words and the Howard enactment of its poet-hero, Alan Squier.

Oddly enough, in both these instances, the performances of the plays' stars were quite perceptibly enhanced by translation to the screen, probably because through the magic magnification of the close-up the smallest play of the features of their extraordinarily expressive faces was brought out more clearly on the screen than was possible in the stage presentation.

Those things of today, as well as of yesterday, which deserve a place in the cultural awareness of people of taste and discrimination, can be brought to us through the medium of the screen.

There is also the purpose of imparting information—the part of our background that we derive from our newspapers and magazines. The screen has its newspapers and magazines too. The newsreels, of course, the forceful *March of Time*, the ever-present travelogues, all are valuable as sources of background.

The Music with the Films

An appreciation of music and a familiarity with the leading arias of opera and the dominant themes

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of orchestral music form an important part of one's cultural background.

At least an approach to this vast realm can be made through the cinema. Since Grace Moore first won her tremendous popularity, a whole chorus of cinema sopranos, tenors, and baritones—the movies have developed as yet no four-star contralto—have practically exhausted the range of operatic music, with the exception of the somewhat awesome Wagner. *Carmen*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *La Bohème*, *La Tosca*, and *Madame Butterfly* have been plundered of their loveliest melodies for the benefit of film audiences.

Orchestral music has not been so extensively utilized by the films. Frequently bits and snatches of classic symphonies, tone poems, and the like are used as musical accompaniment. Both *The Last Patrol* and *The Informer* had splendid musical scores—eloquent, but not obtrusive, in tune with the manner of the film and the mood of the sequence, and composed almost entirely of recognizedly fine music.

Perhaps the supreme instance of the use of good music to illustrate the emotional essence of a dramatic scene was in the final sequences of *Farewell to Arms*, in which Helen Hayes and Gary Cooper performed the story's lyric, tragic climax to the accompaniment of the *Liebestod* music of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

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Korngold's arrangement of the Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream* suite played a notable part in the artistic success of the film version. No one who sat for two hours through the rich outpourings of the German composer's music could entirely neglect it. His musical background was sensibly enriched by attendance at the film.

Good Taste in Décor

Just as moving-picture producers have of late made increasing use of good music, so has their visual taste improved, a sign, perhaps, that the motion-picture public is more demanding than it used to be. But whatever the reason for the change, it has definitely made the films a more profitable source for the acquisition of background.

Gone—and we hope forever—are the terrible exhibitions of button makers' dreams of beauty. No longer does a setting presumably representing the home of Gerald Smythe-Baconby, a New York millionaire and a reasonably pleasant and cultivated fellow, resemble one of the less cozy corners of the Grand Central station.

Admitted that the lovely actresses who portray the gilded daughters of wealth still dress in a bizarre and somewhat circusy fashion, the sets through which they move and the furnishings and decorations casually strewn about usually reflect simplicity, handsomeness, and good taste. On a

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less lavish scale, they might be copied by earnest and intelligent householders with a result that would resemble a home more nearly than a Madison Avenue cocktail lounge.

One of the earliest symptoms of this change was the *décor* of the film *When Ladies Meet*. Rooms that were supposed to represent a Connecticut barn redecorated as a country home were pretty much like that—chic, gay, and amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has an unusually competent staff of decorators and designers, with the result that in most of their films the eye is pleased by rich but credible exhibits of interior decoration, combining awareness of the modern note with an appreciation of period motifs.

Forming Critical Standards

Lastly, the films can help us develop background by teaching us an appreciation of the things of which they themselves are constituted—such as writing, direction, and acting.

Certainly a taste in acting, an intelligent preference for the work of one player to that of another, a knowledge and appreciation of the technique of the leading directors, an understanding of the reasons for the success or failure of a film, the development of an ear for canny or witty or effectively dramatic dialogue—all these things may be counted as part of the equipment of todays' cultured and intelligent person.

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None of these things, however, can be developed merely by accepting the movies as mere entertainment. No one should sit through a film with his mind and judgment utterly at rest and expect to get anything from it but a sheer and profitless pastime.

This matter of developing background is a business of being alive to every manifestation of life and, through the exercise of our judgment, of improving our standards.

When you are in a movie theater, watch the screen closely. Choose your films from among those that are apt to be worth your while. To do this, at first, you must have your guideposts. You must select the critic whose judgment you most respect. Do not choose one, for instance, who merely informs you, no matter how lyrically, that "the story is cute," "Jean Harlow is gorgeous," "Gary Cooper has never been more adorable," or "You'll laugh and cry as never before." All those things you can probably discover for yourself.

The critic whose intellectual standards and demands seem to be a notch or two above your own is the one for you to pick. For it is he who will point out to you, with a little more authority than you can muster yourself, which of the newer films is worth while from any point of view you may be interested in and which is merely amusing. Not that you are to forswear movies as entertainment, but you should recognize that the light and

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frivolous Hollywood output will probably be of no great assistance to you in your search for background.

Some of the weekly magazines have critics of intelligence and discrimination, and there are one or two critics of this type in every large city. Try out a few. Match their taste with yours. Discover for yourself if they are helping you in keeping abreast of the films. It may take a little while to find the one best suited to your own thought and opinions, but it should not prove an extraordinarily difficult task.

Cultured people today are discussing films as never before. The important pictures are considered essential homework for civilized dinner-table conversation.

It is no longer a sign of mediocrity to have definite opinions about the work of Frank Capra, Clarence Brown, John Ford, and the dozen or so other top-notch film directors. René Clair, Ernst Lubitsch, Josef von Sternberg are names brought into civilized conversation as frequently as those of Thomas Wolfe, William Saroyan, and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

If you are a movie-goer, keep abreast of the better films. Learn what is going on, what the important new trends are. The cinema is of today—a reflection of the thought and modes of the moment.

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Appreciate the films both for what they are and for what they can bring you—glimpses of the classics, convenient versions of up-to-date novels and plays, topical information, some knowledge and experience of good music, and so forth. Certainly they will supply phases of background that would be at least difficult or tedious to acquire otherwise.

The Theater's Aids to Background

Although the theater is, for most of us, a rarer experience, it is a more intensive and valuable one.

The theater brings us classics too—classics not only of the theater but of the library. Among others, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* have received admirable translation to the stage. Shaw's fine play, *Saint Joan*, and Ibsen's *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* recently received worthy revivals in the hands of two of America's finest actresses—Katherine Cornell and Alla Nazimova.

Modern playwrights are less hampered than Hollywood scenarists by artificial taboos. While the film capital labors to bring forth a *Bright Eyes* or *Way Down East*, the theater gives us really stirring stuff like *Dead End*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Bury the Dead*, and *Johnny Johnson*. Intellectually the stage is far in advance of the screen. The thoughts it can clothe in physical manifestation are more mature and more substantial.

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In diction and felicity of language, the legitimate drama still has a slight edge on Hollywood. A knowledge of how fine and varied an instrument English is for the expression of thoughts and ideas and an understanding of how beautifully it may be spoken are far more apt to be brought to us by the stage than by the screen.

That wholesome commodity, satire, has yet to be successfully purveyed by a film. René Clair, the French director, has probably come closer to capturing it than any other. But satire, light, mocking, or diabolically damning, flourishes in the world of the theater, exhibiting itself occasionally even in so lowly a dramatic form as the musical show.

The stage reflects sharply the modern trends of thought. The many so-called "protest plays" that have come to the boards in the last three or four years are an evidence of the growing uncertainty and disillusionment through which the world is uncomfortably, even dangerously, passing. Enterprising young dramatists are continually experimenting with the established dramatic forms in an effort to find some new and striking means of self-expression. There has not been a real dramatic innovation in Hollywood since the film was first put into conventional five- and six-reel lengths. Even the comparatively mild invention of narrating a film backwards, psychologically rather than chronologically, as exhibited in *The Power and the Glory*, was labeled revolutionary and unprece-

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dented and was dubbed "narratage," a word which the film never managed to live down.

Another thing which the theater can bring us and which we do not find in films is the joy of witnessing in the flesh a truly great and living performance, the communication of great personalities directly to the audience within the theater's walls.

Watching Garbo, Hepburn, or Laughton on the screen can be a stimulating and enlightening experience. But being present while Helen Hayes is playing Queen Victoria or Mary Stuart or while Katharine Cornell is bringing to life the young and love-struck Juliet or the flaming Joan of Domremy is an unforgettable privilege, a poignant and thrilling wonder in which one personally has participated.

Knowledge of the theater is definitely a part of background. The theater has its connoisseurs, men and women of taste and intelligence, as definitely as any of the art forms, music, painting, literature, or sculpture. The knowledge gained by attendance and personal experience is infinitely more vital and memorable than any amount of laborious studying of critiques and histories of the drama.

The Reading of Plays

Those of us who cannot see Shaw's *Saint Joan* or Ibsen's *Ghosts* or other significant plays upon the stage can at least enjoy much that they have to

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give by reading them in printed form. The publication of plays and the taste for reading plays have developed side by side. Today all dramatic writing of merit appears in book form, often simultaneously with the stage production.

Whether one gains more from a play from an orchestra seat or from one's library chair remains a debatable question. William Archer contended that a play could be called a play only when in performance, with author, actor, director, producer, and audience all collaborating. The Spanish playwright, Jacinto Benavente, on the other hand, gave up writing for the stage and wrote his plays for readers alone, contending that only through reading could his ideas be properly understood.

Certainly published scripts exist, whether we call them plays or not. From them we can get all the literary skill and imaginative contribution of the author. The presentation of plays as books has necessitated the creation of a new art form. This is the author's own elaboration of his initial stage directions. Today, thanks to the example of Shaw and Barrie and A. A. Milne, these interpolations often prove delightful reading in themselves when lit by sudden flashes of wit and edged with satire. They stimulate our imagination to recreate the stage pictures presented, by describing the setting, the costumes, and the action that we would see for ourselves if we had the opportunity of witnessing

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the drama on the boards. The collected dramas of Shaw, Barrie, Pinero, and Galsworthy and the printed plays of Eugene O'Neill, Robert Sherwood, Maxwell Anderson, and Philip Barry give us background in the progress of the English-speaking stage and valuable comments on contemporary living.

CHAPTER IX

MAKING YOUR BACKGROUND COUNT

How to make background an asset in: conversation, letter writing, public speech, the conducting of meetings, and organization and committee work.

So far we have been concerned with the acquisition of background. We have benefited as individuals by increasing our capacity for the enjoyment of life and living; we have benefited as members of a social order by developing our ability to give and receive the most in our contacts with other people.

Are we going to make this background really count?

In the normal activities of everyday life such as conversations, letter writing, public speaking, and committee and organization work—the channels through which we project our personality to the outside world—background makes itself evident at every turn. It is to us what training is to the athlete, what poise and self-assurance are to the public lecturer. It is the basis of confidence.

Let us touch on some of the ways in which we all can utilize this great asset of background in our everyday life.

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Background and Our Conversation

We can recall here the first rule we learned as the "curtain raiser" to all mental effort—to relax.

Long before modern science had shown us the evils of repression and the need for release, the wise ones of the earth recognized the benefits that conversation brought to mental health. Cicero was a great diner-out and brought a fund of good talk as well as a hearty appetite to the tables of his hosts. Back in 43 B.C. he wrote to his friend Paetus:

I take it ill that you have stopped going to dinners, for you have deprived yourself of much delight and pleasure. I advise you to consort with men merry and good, friends of yours. It is not pleasure I have in mind but living and eating together, and that relaxation of the spirit that is best brought about by familiar discourse. Conversation is the most charming thing about banquets. Take care of your health; you can best do so by dining out.

The relaxation of spirit which Cicero notes as one of conversation's blessings is also one of its chief prerequisites. The process of relaxation indicates a certain leisure. Good conversation needs ample time in which to flower and come to fruition. One cannot give one's whole attention to it and talk with an eye on the clock.

Conversation may be defined as an oral give and take between two minds, or between a group of minds. In this game, the first thing to realize is

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that the greatest conversational asset we have is our own naturalness. Our study has aided us here for it has given us assurance and confidence in ourselves.

Naturalness and ease always make a tremendous impression. Recently a young chap, who in his small home town had developed a gift for verse writing, wrote several poems that attracted the attention of some New York verse lovers. This youthful Shelley was asked to the metropolis, was taken out to dinner by his hosts, and was then brought to a gathering of authors at which his verses were read and acclaimed. Throughout all of this, the inexperienced and unsophisticated boy gave to everyone who met him a pleasant consciousness of his complete poise.

What was his secret? What gave the sophisticated people he met the impression that he, a young country lad, was perfectly at ease with them? His poise sprang from two sources. First, his manners were good. They showed that he had undoubted background. Second, he did not try in any shape or form to impress. He did not try to "put himself across." He was himself; the distinguished writers saw that and at once they also were themselves. The way stood open for good talk.

Even more necessary than natural manners and ease is having something to say. Background counts for more here than almost anywhere else. It has

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increased at every turn our interest in men and affairs. Robert Louis Stevenson offered some sound advice when he said: "Talk of what truly interests you, whether it be Shakespeare or white bait." Through our reading, our study, and our observation, we have developed a variety of topics. We have taken a wide field of knowledge for our province. We are competent to talk now if necessary on both Shakespeare *and* white bait.

Although the subject on which we talk with naturalness and ease must hold interest for us, it is essential also that our fellow conversationalists consider it stimulating and diverting too. Our background helps us to find this common interest.

To get started on the right track is always of supreme importance. The late Sir Walter Raleigh, the eminent critic, makes use of nautical metaphors that might have come to the mind of the great seaman who bore the same name:

It's not going fast under full sail that tires you; it's steering among shoals and shallows. Every time you say something and it's not taken as you meant it, an hour comes off your life.

One way, and perhaps the best and only way, to avoid responsibility for such painful navigation is to see to it that we always make our own meaning sufficiently clear. The word range that our study has given us enables us to do this without difficulty.

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A contemporary American writer, when still a little girl, noticed that a young woman of her acquaintance always attracted a circle of men and kept them in animated conversation. The little girl, no doubt with an eye to her own future, asked the young lady how she so successfully held the interest and attention of men.

"I always start an argument," was the answer.

This is not a bad hint for conversational success if applied with skill and moderation. The development of background has sharpened our critical faculties and has enabled us to form our own opinions. It is the clash of varying opinions that makes argument; it is the validity of our critical standards that makes valuable what we say in support of our opinion.

Perhaps the chief benefit we have gained lies in our enhanced idea of conversation as a gracious art. We have encountered it at its best in the books of George Eliot, in the novels of John Galsworthy, and in the plays of Shaw and Barrie and the younger contemporary dramatists. We have marveled at its aptness when we read it reported in biographies and memoirs. We have listened to it on the stage when a topic tossed from one character to another keeps airily animated like a gay balloon in a nightclub. We have become acquainted with high standards that we can use in forming our own patterns.

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For instance, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in placing on record his impressions of Oscar Wilde as a talker, has given us a picture in slow motion of a brilliant conversationalist. We can easily pick out the elements in Wilde's talk which created so favorable an impression on his hearers.

His conversation left an indelible impression on my mind. He towered above us all, and yet had the art of seeming to be interested in all that we could say. He had delicacy of feeling and tact, for the monologue man, however clever, can never be a gentleman at heart. He took as well as gave, but what he gave was unique. He had a curious precision of statement, a delicate flavor of humor, and a trick of small gestures to illustrate his meaning, which were peculiar to himself.

How Background Counts in Letter Writing

What elements constitute a good letter? If we go through the morning's mail and pick out the one we consider the best of the lot, we may answer the question for ourselves. We will find that the letter selected is legible, direct in style, distinctive in tone, correct in its spelling, and assured in its usage of the language.

How can our possession of background aid us in our correspondence? How will it help us to write good letters? It can assist us in the following ways:

In providing us with fine models

In enlarging our vocabulary so that we may avoid the trite and the banal

GIVE YOURSELF BACKGROUND

In giving us an assurance of style

In providing us with a wide field of allusion and quotation

In showing us the value of organization and plan

The great English letter writers are William Cowper, Charles Lamb, Edward FitzGerald, and Robert Louis Stevenson. To represent our own times and to act as more recent models, we can add the graceful correspondence of Katherine Mansfield, the vivacious epistles of Theodore Roosevelt to his children, and the informed and cultivated letters of Walter H. Page.

Although we ourselves may never approach these peaks of letter writing, such examples show us what letters can mean at their best. Our familiarity with that best means that our own writing guided by such standards will never be quite the same again. It will seek to leave the mediocre class and achieve individuality.

As our appreciation of style develops, we grow more and more impatient of all writing that lacks this essential. We come to abhor the hackneyed and the stereotyped. We adopt this critical attitude toward all that we ourselves write, and as a result strive to employ words and phrases other than those worn threadbare through overuse. The cultivated letter writer can indeed develop a real charm of style, for charm comes from a personal knack in using words and phrases in such a way that they call up a series of pleasing sensations to the mind.

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We develop style through writing and not by formula. Letter writing provides this practice we need. The more we write, the better we shall write. We gain facility in putting words interestingly together. As a rule we take over into our writing style the characteristics of our speech. Nowadays we speak for the most part in short declarative sentences. These give a directness, a crispness, and a vivacity to all we write. With practice, we come to vary our sentence lengths, and in this way we avoid monotony.

The advantage that a wide field of allusion and quotation gives to any form of expression need hardly be stressed. In letter writing such allusions often lift the material completely out of the humdrum class. Suppose, for instance, we wish to write a note of congratulation to a friend. If we follow the old routine, we write: "Please accept my sincere congratulations on your election," etc., etc. Such a letter would resemble a score of others and have no distinguishing qualities. On the other hand, if we give the letter a little thought and bring into it an allusion, we might produce something like this:

When Shakespeare wrote that some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them, he left out a most important classification. He omitted those who deserve greatness. Certainly the Society decided that you deserved it when they elected you President. I heartily agree with that decision. Congratulations, Mr. President!

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The good reply takes its cue from the note received. In this instance, such a response might run:

Dear Jack:

It strikes me that a man who can improve on Shakespeare is a good person to have as one's friend. I'll know where to turn when I need advice in my new office as President.

In the meantime, accept my best thanks for your congratulations. I appreciate them mightily.

Centuries ago, Pliny started a letter to a friend by saying: "I haven't time to write you a short letter, so I send a long one." He knew, as all people of cultivation know, that all that is concise and to the point follows a definite order and plan, and that all that is tedious, haphazard, and lacking in pertinence and precision follows its own sweet way. The artist in any line is one who can bring order out of chaos. He selects, arranges, organizes. Our association with writers who have mastered their medium will have its effect on us. We shall instinctively, even in our letter writing, seek to be clear, correct, legible, to the point, interesting, and individual.

Background and Our Public Speech

Mankind from earliest times has divided itself into those who speak and those who listen. Today, as in the past, many of the men who dominate the world and who take positions of leadership in their

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community have reached their eminence through their ability to speak. Today the radio has enhanced the prestige of this ability by multiplying listeners a million times and by training the public to receive ideas through the ear. We no sooner begin to make our personality count in our communities than the necessity arises for us to speak in public. This may not at first take the form of a lecture or an address. It may be that, as a member of a group, we are asked to state our opinion. Club life, organization life, church life, all make such demands upon us. We face the necessity of expressing our thoughts in public.

How can we best make our background count when this occasion comes? We can make it count in the following ways:

In our poise

In the arrangement and content of our material

In the variety of our vocabulary

In our wealth of illustration and allusion

The French phrase for poise is *savoir faire*. This gives the word a real meaning for, translated, it says "to know how to do." Our knowledge of what is required and how best to fill that requirement, together with that increased assurance in ourselves as cultured and competent individuals, gives us this first and foremost asset of the speaker.

In addition to knowing what to do, we also know what *not* to do, which is of almost equal value. We

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know the effect produced on an audience by naturalness in a speaker; we know also the effect produced by fussiness, affectation, and mannerisms. Through listening to addresses and lectures and through our reading of good speeches, we have established models on which to pattern our own oratorical manners and methods.

Our experience as listeners and readers has likewise brought to the fore our appreciation of well-arranged material. We know that a good speech represents a complete whole: the beginning, the middle, the end. We have become familiar with the technique of exposition, and we know how each part of the plan follows logically and in order. Even if we are called on to speak without preparation, we need not be at a loss, for the acquaintance with the procedure of exposition will come to our aid and help us quickly to organize our thoughts under several related heads.

To sing the praise of a varied vocabulary at this stage would be to chant a series of repetitions. All our contacts with the best in literature and in life have impressed upon us the primary importance of words. "In the beginning was the word."

Similarly, too, we have come to see the importance of apt illustration. We have admired it in talk and writing which interested us; we have felt its woeful lack in material which bored us. Our own experience has shown us that facts and opinions which lack illustration leave us cold. We wish to

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have abstractions translated for us in some concrete and applicable form. Accordingly we see to it in our own outpourings that we do not leave our thoughts in the air; we give them practical value by illustrating them. Our reading, our concert and lecture attendance, and our acquaintance with the drama have all contributed to the wealth of illustrative material on which we can draw.

Perhaps the most valuable hint that we take over from our models in public speech is the hint that, when we have said all that we intend to say, the time has come to stop. We may recall what John Bright told the students at Oxford who asked him for some rules of oratory: "Think of your subjects as so many islands to each of which you swim in turn. *But never, on any account, leave your last island.*"

Meeting and Committee Work

It may happen that the duty of conducting a public meeting comes our way. To be able to do this with precision and dispatch is to perform a useful public service. The realization of this fact may have come to us through reading some humorous article or story which depicted a club meeting being conducted in what the cynic would call a purely feminine manner.

At such a gathering there are no minutes at all, or minutes of a very sketchy character. After the pretense at a formal opening, the meeting quickly turns into an informal conversational gathering.

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There is no attempt made by the chairman to control the meeting. Those present address the chair if they feel like it or carry on a lengthy argument with some other member. Several such arguments may fill the air at the same time. Occasionally someone may put a suggestion in the form of a motion. As often as not, such a motion is never seconded or put to the meeting, but is entered as having passed if there is no dissenting voice.

Such a meeting may be an amusing experience in fiction. In actual life, it becomes a time-wasting and fatuous affair. It cannot occur when any competent and informed person holds the reins. Such a chairman is familiar with the correct rules of procedure. These regulations which have developed slowly are now established in the form we refer to as parliamentary procedure. They have grown out of long experience and are based on the practice of the British House of Commons, the "mother of parliaments." Sir Reginald Palgrave calls them, "the result of English common-sense acting with precision and uniformity for at least three centuries." Familiarity with these basic forms is an essential part of the equipment of the man or woman who has organization work to do.

In these days when every human activity is organized to the hilt, it is as difficult to dodge a nomination to some committee or other as it is to escape the common cold. When asked to serve, the cultivated individual uses his or her back-

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ground, not only in dealing with the business brought before the meetings, but in sizing up and working with the members of the committee.

Such individual qualification shows itself in the following ways:

Confidence in one's capacity to do the work required

Ability to speak to the point, and to reason in support of or against the action proposed

Facility in organizing material

Familiarity with authorities on the subject

To take up each of these assets in turn would be to traverse old ground. We have found them invaluable in conversation, in public speaking, in letter writing—indeed, in any circumstance where we make our thoughts articulate. In committee work they come chiefly to the fore when we find ourselves faced by the “issues” that each new proposition raises.

This traditional quartet of queries confronts each idea that any committee can put forth. They are:

Is it fair?

Will it work?

Does it fall in line with tradition?

Is it adequate?

At every turn background helps us answer these questions. It supplies us with standards of comparison, with a “cloud of witnesses” for or against the suggestion being discussed, with illustrations of the success or failure of the notion in the past, and with an array of authorities to suggest as umpires.

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In committee work, in addition to dealing with ideas, we have also to work with our fellow committee members. To get along with people requires talent. To get along successfully means that one must develop that talent into an art.

If our reading and our training have done nothing else, they have shown us the leading role that tact plays in all human relations.

Our readings in psychology alone will have brought us into contact with such twists in human types as the domineering type, the timid type, the egocentric type, and the "Babbitt." It has given us, too, an understanding of such types: why they exist and how best to adjust ourselves to them. This is fortunate, for in committee work, in business contacts, and in everyday life we shall all run into them as flesh-and-blood individuals. Our knowledge of the fiction and drama that introduce these characters into the story has also enlightened us. We know both their strength and their weakness; we know how best to utilize the one and to lessen the influence of the other.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the people who make up our world are not "casebook" examples, but likeable, interesting people. Our background enables us to get along with them with mutual benefit, with understanding, with tact, and with that gentle courtesy which is the perfect flower of all true culture.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

The tangible benefits of background. The intangible benefits. The search for truth.

We are the heirs of all the ages. Our reading has given us a hint of the vastness of our legacy. Our minds, stimulated by this reading, have speculated, perhaps, on our personal responsibility as legatees. How can we best use this bequest which the accumulated efforts of mankind have given us?

To make practical use of background is one way of accepting our responsibility as heirs. If we fail to do so, we act like the unwise servant of the parable who hid his talent. It behooves us rather to emulate his more astute contemporaries and to develop and increase our initial capital.

How can we best make practical use of background? We can do this by selecting what we need and shaping what we select to our own tangible ends. The Japanese have come a long way in the world in a short space of time. Their critics attribute this success to expertness along the lines indicated by these three words . . . adopt, adapt, adept. That is, they have taken advantage of

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non-Japanese cultures, methods, and ideas and they have utilized them to meet their own purposes. They have become extremely skillful in so doing. The wise man takes a tip wherever he finds one. There is much in this Japanese way of getting along which we can take over and apply in our own interest.

The cultivation of our faculties and the enrichment of our minds have contributed to the development of our ability to think for ourselves. We learn from psychology that, while remembering is performing a previously learned act, "*thinking* is doing something partially new." We all draw for our background upon existing knowledge. We take what we have drawn, we assimilate, and, by thinking, we add to it. The great initiators—the Galileos, the Newtons, the Harveys, the Listers, the Pasteurs, the Marconis, and the Einsteins—are the exception, not the rule. But as heirs, we too have the great opportunity of adding in some way to the world's betterment. To whom much is given, from him much shall be required. We have all, as John Erskine has pointed out, the moral obligation to be intelligent.

For one thing, our self-cultivation has already sharpened our critical faculties. We have brought ourselves in contact with the best. We have chosen as criteria the high standards of good taste which civilization has set up. Let us be guided by these

CONCLUSION: USEFUL DISCIPLINES

standards. We can benefit ourselves, and in so doing benefit the world, by supporting the worthwhile and by withholding our support from the mediocre and the trashy.

But even more important than the practical advantages that we derive from cultivation and the practical benefits that our cultivation enables us to confer is that great intangible—the spiritual asset. Aristotle hints at the nature of this spiritual satisfaction when he writes:

The search for truth is in one way hard and in another way easy. For it is evident that no one can master it fully nor yet miss it wholly. But each adds a little to our knowledge of nature, and from all the facts assembled there arises a certain grandeur.

When we come to perceive this “certain grandeur,” we have reached the point at which we regard education not merely as the means of making a living, but as the guide to making a life.

DISCIPLINES AND ASSIGNMENTS

DISCIPLINES

The following self-disciplines are suggested as ways to prevent oneself from getting into a rut.

One day a week read a newspaper you do not ordinarily see.

Read a different magazine every month.

One day a week read some department of your newspaper which you do not ordinarily read.

In setting up your reading program, vary your diet; let it contain simultaneously history, fiction, drama, science.

Listen to unfamiliar radio programs.

Once a month do something or go someplace you do not ordinarily include in your routine.

Keep a diary—even if you record only the high point and the low point of each day.

Take a few minutes before going to bed to review the happenings of the day.

Get into conversation with different types of people.

Play as much as time allows.

EXERCISES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Chapter II

1. Make a list of the musical terms you know but do not understand. Look them up in your dictionary and learn the definitions.

2. Similarly learn the definitions of unfamiliar terms you find in the pages devoted to music in your daily or Sunday newspaper and in concert programs.

3. Whenever you hear singing over the radio or at concerts make a point of identifying each voice as tenor, baritone, bass, soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, etc.

4. Learn the stories of the leading operas from some available work of reference such as *Stories of the Great Operas* by Ernest Newman (Garden City).

5. Read the lives of the great composers.

6. When you listen to symphonic music, try to identify the major theme or themes as each makes its appearance.

7. Analyze what you like, dislike, or fail to understand in all the music you hear.

8. Take skeleton notes on the next lecture you attend by jotting down the speaker's main divisions of thought. Using this skeleton outline, stand up in your own room and make a speech of five minutes' duration, following the train of thought that the outline suggests.

Pick from this outline the point which at the lecture most interested you. Speak on that point for five minutes, using in your own words as many of the lecturer's illustrations and comments as you can recall.

9. List the three chief personal contacts you made today. Recall the topic put forth by each individual in turn as the chief subject of conversation.

EXERCISES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Did these conversations enlarge in any way your

Knowledge?

Understanding of persons or events?

If so, what was the chief knowledge or understanding gained?

Chapter III

1. Tune in for ten minutes on a routine radio program. Pick out any words you think the announcer may have mispronounced. Check this list with your pronouncing dictionary.

2. List from today's leading editorial or article all the words, the meaning of which you know but which you refrain from using because you are uncertain of the pronunciation.

3. Add these words to your speaking range. Using the dictionary as guide, set down these words with accents and sounds in the manner shown in Chap. III.

4. Listen to a lecture or radio address by a person of culture. List all the words used which are new to you.

5. When next you have to play "parlor games," introduce a pronouncing bee as outlined in Chap. III, using a dictionary as umpire.

Chapter IV

1. Take ten words from this chapter. Beside each jot down its denotation and also its connotation.

2. Construct sentences using each of these ten words to show precise meaning; imaginative meaning.

3. From the next radio talk pick at least five words that are new to you. Discover their meaning and make a point of introducing them at once in conversation.

4. List the words that the last cross-word puzzle has added to your range.

Chapter V

1. Construct a reading plan based on one or other of these periods: the Elizabethan Age, the Reformation, the French occupation of Canada, the Civil War, the period of Arctic exploration. Include in this plan:

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- A book of general information
- A biography
- A novel
- A drama
- A poem or verse epic
- A book written in the period in question.
- 2. Outline a second plan, basing it on a dominant personality.
Make sure that your selections include
 - Writings and records left by that individual
 - A book that builds up the background of the time in which he lived
 - Biography
 - Critical appraisals of that personality by his contemporaries and by present-day writers
- 3. List all the characters you recall from your reading which lead lives outside the books in which they appear, as, for example Sherlock Holmes.
- 4. Analyze the general reader appeal made by:
 - The six current best-selling novels
 - The six best-selling books of nonfiction
- 5. With the aid of your librarian, make a list of fifteen to twenty worth-while novels which trace the course of American history from the time of the first settlements to the present day.

Chapter VI

1. From your reading in biography and fiction pick out characters that exemplify the following types:
 - Self-sufficient
 - Emotionally dependent
 - Sadist
 - Domineering
 - Insensitive and unseeing
 - Abnormal
2. What has your fiction reading contributed to your understanding of such problems as
 - Youth in an unsettled world
 - The sentiment for peace

EXERCISES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The influence in the home of strict parental control
The juxtaposition of three generations
Moral irregularity
Divorce

Chapter VII

From the Sunday issue of a metropolitan daily, mark and clip the contributions to the general reading plan you have adopted in Chap. V.

List these under such heads as

Biography

Amplification of period background

Latest research in the field

Contemporary opinions on the general subject

Select an outstanding topic from today's news and on it write an editorial of three paragraphs, using the technique formula supplied in Chap. VII. Compare this when written with the newspaper's own editorial on the subject. Check the comparison with regard to background, cogency of reasoning, validity of opinion expressed, and ease of style.

From a current magazine select

A humorous anecdote, incident, or allusion

A sentence or phrase which succinctly describes a character or a personality

A striking opinion with which you concur or disagree

Familiarize yourself with this material and make a point of introducing it in whole or in part into your next conversation.

Choose from today's radio offerings a program that purports to be "educational." Listen to it critically and jot down your observations on it in reference to these questions:

What was its purpose?

How much of this purpose did it achieve?

What did I gain from it in information and in understanding?

How could this program gain in value?

Chapter VIII

1. Attend a motion picture based on a famous book you have read. What points did the motion picture bring out which you

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missed in the reading? What elements of the story did it omit? In what ways, if any, did the motion picture enhance your understanding of the book?

2. Attend a play or motion picture based on an outstanding historical personage. What elements in the character did the performance emphasize? Are they as important as the performance indicated? In what ways did the interpretation add to your understanding of the character?

3. List the contemporary problems raised in the plays you have seen or read during the past month. Did the solutions offered appear feasible to you?

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